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“WRITING-TABLES ARE TO BE PREFERRED TO DESKS”

(SEE PAGE 234)

Homes and Their Decoration

By

Lillie Hamilton French

Author of

“Hezekiah’s Wives,” “My Old Maid’s Corner,” etc.

New York

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1913

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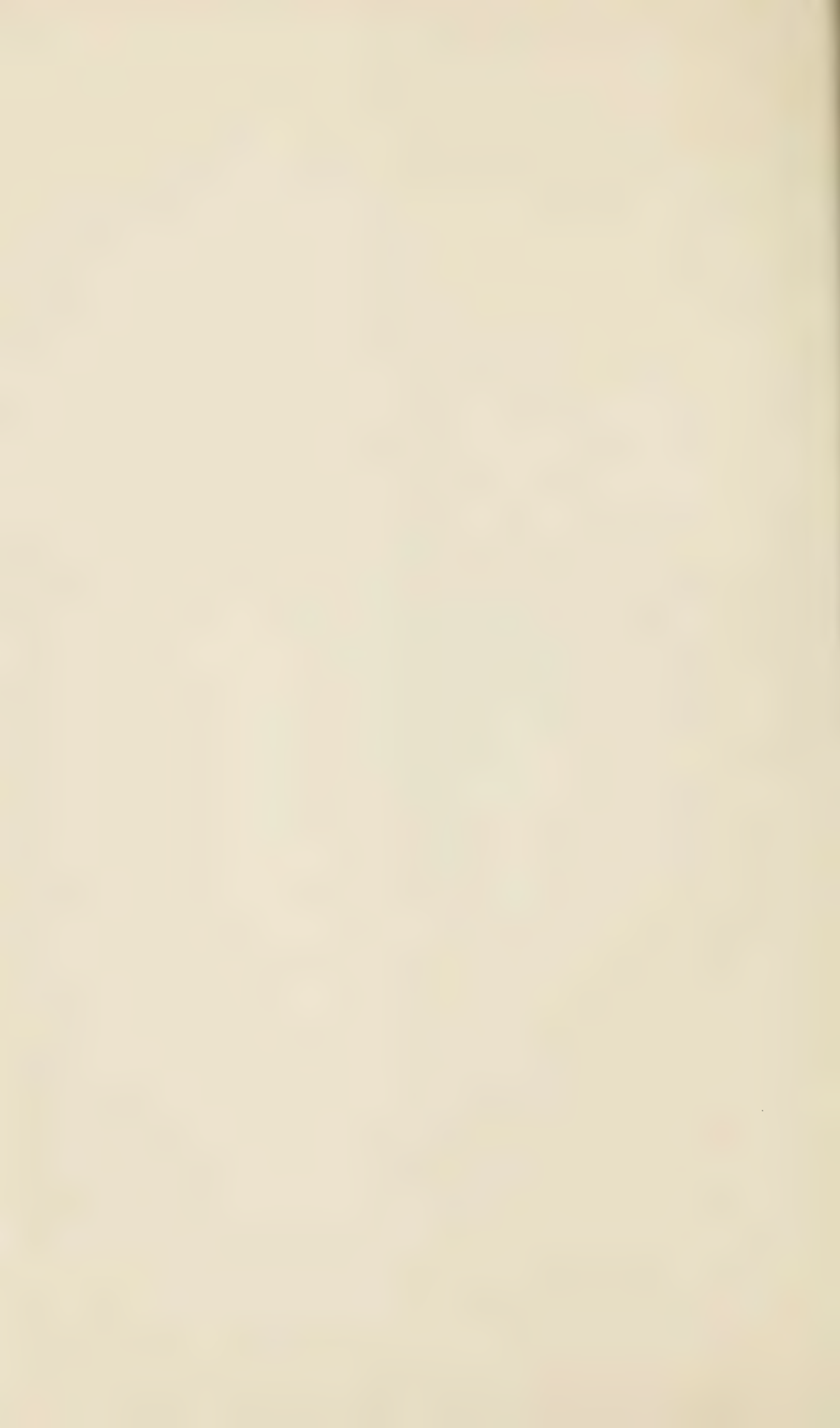
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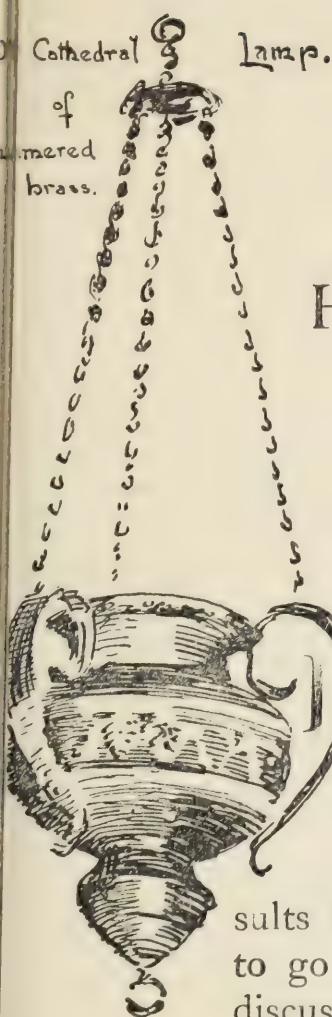
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Homes and Their Decoration





HOMES & THEIR DECORATION

CHAPTER I

INDIVIDUAL REQUIREMENTS

IN the following pages I have made no attempt to discuss architectural periods or problems. My purpose has been to help the bewildered householder to see clearly what results she has been striving for, and how to go to work to obtain them. I have discussed the question of decoration from this point of view only, quoting examples of successful interiors whenever they have seemed helpful. An experience of some years in answering letters from all over this country, from Canada, and from our colonists abroad, — letters written by women of wealth, of limited means, by the schoolgirl and the bride, — has enabled me to know something of the needs of a portion of my country-women. By means of this correspondence I discovered that for the most part these women were harassed by a sense of their own limitations, and confused by a medley

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

of suggestions, and by various proclamations relating to infallible standards in household decoration, — standards which might have been infallible for somebody else in some other condition, perhaps, but which were altogether inappropriate for them in theirs.

Because of the needs of these women, therefore, I have begun with this question of requirements. There is no escape from it, when a human habitation comes under discussion, — whether this habitation take the form of a palace, a barrack, or a camp; whether whole houses are to be consecrated to the use of single families, or whole families are to be housed on a single floor; whether the home is to be a tenement, a studio-building, a hut in the wilderness, or cottage in a country town; whether it is to be in a hot climate or a cold one; whether its owners are rich or poor, important or obscure, single or married. To make the home successful, we must know the needs of those who are to dwell in it, their circumstances, and the relation they bear to the community in which they live.

To put it briefly, these requirements are not only individual but communal. They are distinct in each instance, yet certain universal laws govern them all. A man's duties to himself must guide him on one side; his obligations to his neighbor, on the other. These he must balance.

Take, by way of illustration, the executive mansion of a capital, a domicile bearing to the community in which it stands a distinct and recognized

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relationship, the conduct of its inmates toward the public governed by certain fixed and arbitrary rules. Yet, in spite of the limitations prescribed by custom, how different the atmosphere which successive tenants create in the solemn chambers! One performs the duties of a station so gracefully as to become a tradition, another in a way never to be forgotten for its frigidity and its lack of charm. We, who look on, may praise in one instance and decry in another, yet we concede always to each individual the right to his own manner of expression.

The responsibility of comprehending and respecting the domestic and social requirements rests for the most part upon woman. To be successful as their interpreter she must make them a particular study. She must first of all understand what the position of her husband, her father, or her own place in the world makes obligatory in the conduct of her affairs. This understanding gained, she must endeavor to adopt the best and most approved methods of meeting all the demands which may be made upon her and upon her house. Until she has done this she can never hope to understand any question of household decoration; because, after all, the decoration of a house implies, primarily, making provision for special needs. The degree of felicity with which these provisions are made, of course, marks the excellence of one decorator over another.

To be more specific, suppose that a woman has been brought up in a quiet village, or a college town where life was simple, where entertaining was done

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on a small scale ; where dinner-giving was not an art, not a part of a complicated social machinery, but an expression of hospitality, a dropping in of neighbors, or at best, the entertainment of some distinguished professor from another town ; a village in which there was much visiting of an evening, and a going home of everybody, with lights out, at ten o'clock ; where costumes were not elaborate, and where, since the streets were quiet and travelled principally by friends and acquaintances, she could go afoot in her best clothes, requiring no carriage for special functions in the afternoon, and none, unless of choice, for a party at night.

Suppose next that she marry a man of wealth, and move to a town where she is called upon to preside over a large establishment ; or that she marry a politician and move to a capital, perhaps Washington, where receptions and dinners are the order of the day ; where she has to be plunged more or less into public life ; where her duties are not alone to her children, nor to her husband as the head of his house, but to the position which he holds before the world, to the office to which his constituents have elected him. Is it not easy to see that her whole knowledge of living and entertaining will need altering, that she will have to learn how to appoint and run a house on an altogether different scale ? to furnish it after a manner that would never have been tolerated in her native village, bringing quite another point of view to bear upon the question of appointments, equipages, menus, costumes ? In

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other words, she will have to be educated to fill a new position, to follow a social order to which nothing at the old home has accustomed her. She will have to appoint her house not only in a way acceptable to herself, the woman in it, but to the community in which she moves as a conspicuous figure. The decoration of the home then presents itself to her as quite a new problem.

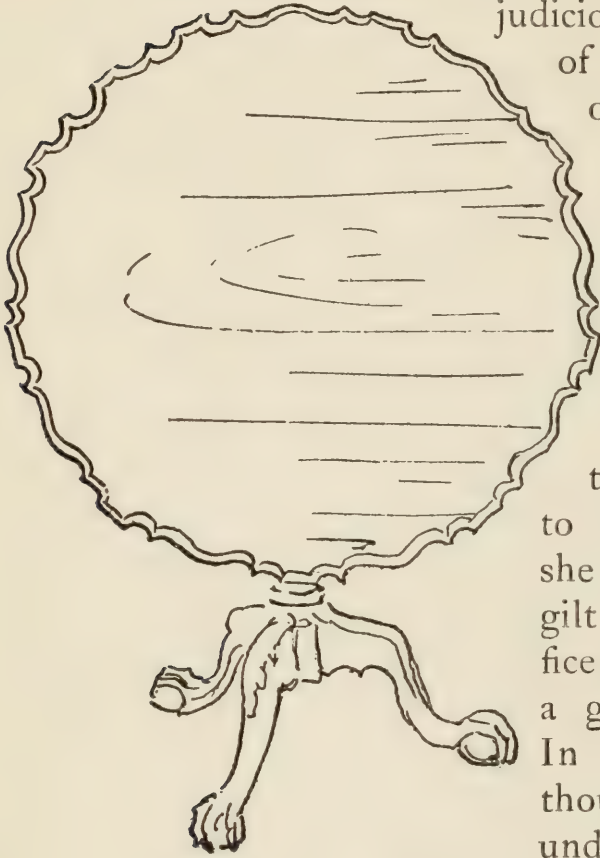
On the other hand, suppose that she had been reared in affluence and had then married a poor clergyman whose parish lay in some remote county ; or a lawyer who had his way to make ; or an officer in the army without a settled home. She might have to begin her new life in a parsonage, an apartment, or an army post. How different the requirements of each case would be ! How differently she would have to consider them !

Or, again, she might be a spinster, choosing between a boarding-house, a couple of rooms, or a cheap apartment. She might, as the wife of an artist, have to live in a studio-building, or if she had lost her money, she might have to content herself with one room only. Had she to come down in the world, be reduced to the necessity of pondering the question of ways and means in the preservation of her dignity and refinement, she would have to approach the subject from still another standpoint, but she would not be so likely to make mistakes in judgment as other people who are trying to widen out ; for she would have all her past experience to call upon, her knowledge of propriety and propor-

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tion to guide her. She would know the essentials of refined living, and what unessentials to avoid. She would, for instance, know how to pick her way

judiciously among cheap articles of furniture, how to choose one tea-cup because its lines were good, even though it cost a sixpence only, how to discard one that cost a little more, because it was pretentious and ugly. She would know, indeed, what good thing the cheap thing tried to imitate. For that reason she would never buy a fragile gilt chair, but she would sacrifice much in order to purchase a good sideboard and table. In this way she would prove, though unconsciously, that she understood what constituted correct principles in the decoration of the home. An undeniable stamp of refinement would at the same time be given to her environment.



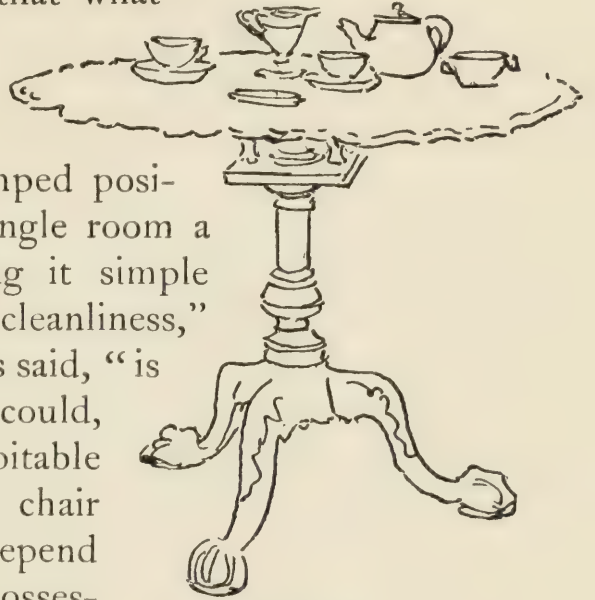
Pie-crust Table

Were she, however, in furnishing a single room, to introduce appointments suitable only to elaborate houses, — furniture covered with satins, brocades, and costly stuffs, or worse still, with imitations of them, — what could be said of her? The very fact

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of her being able to possess but a single room would imply a modest station in life, well-born and high-bred as she might be. But how could she prove her heritage unless she proved that whatever its proud character she could yet adapt herself with dignity to the limitations of an altered and a cramped position? She could lend her single room a certain distinction by keeping it simple and by keeping it clean, and "cleanliness," as some distinguished critic has said, "is a decoration in itself." She could, too, make the one room hospitable even if there were but one chair in it to offer. It would depend upon herself, not upon her possessions. In the placing of that solitary chair, as in the choice of it, she could prove her knowledge of refinement, — imitation brocades and gilt chairs could never prove it.

Inappropriate as the mere elegance of upholstered satins would be in a single room, it must never be forgotten that the presence of a beautiful work of art would lift it at once off the plane of the merely commonplace and essential. A beautiful work of art is never inappropriate anywhere, unless its size prove too overpowering, as in the case of a marble statue in a small room. Having such in her possession, a bit of carving, a painting, a bronze, or even a piece of silver or crystal, were a woman forced to



Pie-crust Table

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live in a hovel, a certain dignity would be lent to her surroundings. And for this reason, it has often

seemed wrong to me for the well-to-do to object to the giving of beautiful things to those of limited means, because the beautiful things were unsuitable, or because only the physical necessities of the

genteel poor ought to be considered. Furbelows are inappropriate in poverty, but beautiful objects

never, if their owners love them. House-

hold gifts ought not to be chosen with reference to the pecu-

niary limitations of the recipients,

but with reference to a power

in the gift to lift and gladden,

bringing

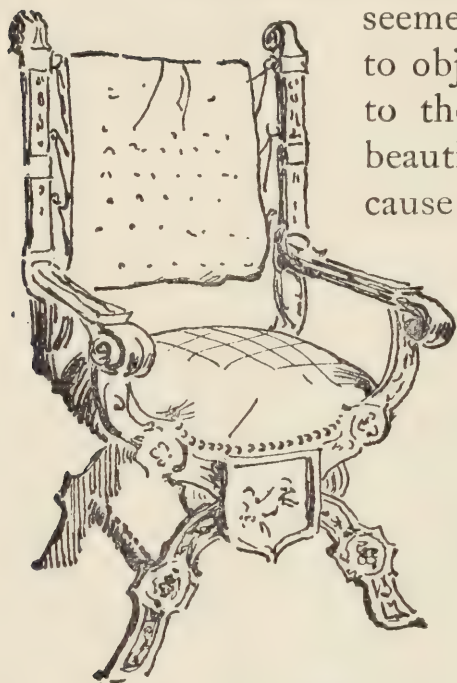
the suggestion of better things into the lives of those unable to

provide such things for themselves. A foolish satin sofa cushion

will not do this, nor an elaborate combination of marble and gilt, but a

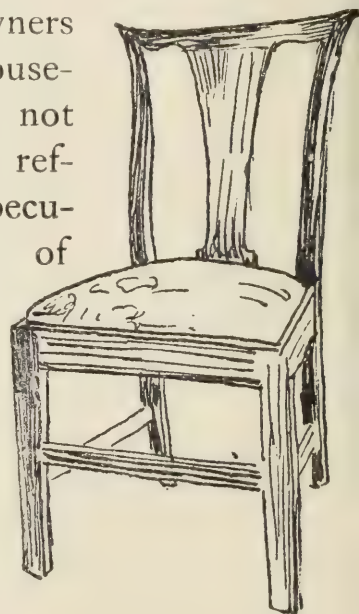
beautiful picture will, or a piece of bronze, a carved chair or table, even if those who receive them must

live out their days in a single room.



Old Dutch chair of oak
richly carved, with
cushions of darkened
leather

Albany Historical Society.



Old chair, used by the
Governor of Virginia,
two hundred years ago

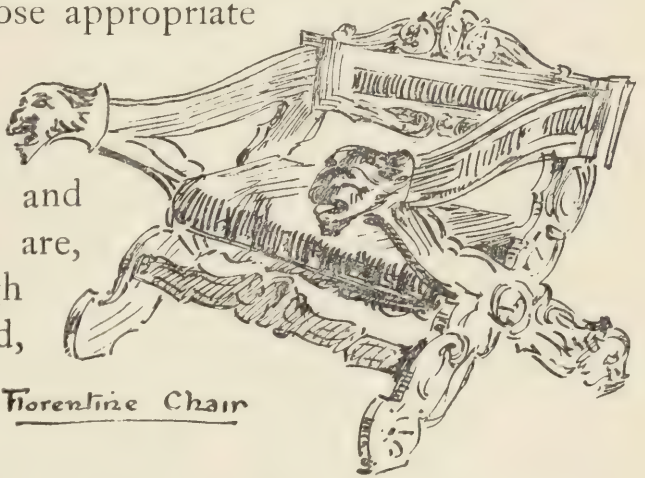
HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

Suppose, once more, a change of condition compelling a woman to a new study of requirements. She had lived a life of social obligations in town, and wanted to escape the formalities and the management of servants, to indulge a holiday spirit under the trees. How ill-judged were she to furnish a cabin in the woods or by the sea with the same appointments as those appropriate

to a city house! The charm of the camps in the Adirondack and Canada woods, luxurious and costly as some of them are, lies in the fact that although every comfort is provided,

nothing suggesting care is introduced; nothing that would imply inter-

ference with the free enjoyment of the woods or the untrammelled life of those who have gone there for rest and refreshment. A satin hanging in a camp would be inappropriate; ebonies, mahoganies, costly inlaid woods, as much out of key as an elaborate service of silver and glass. On finely appointed yachts, where the whole life is luxurious and where the management of details does not devolve upon the owner, but is made over to competent hands, a question of possessions implying too much care does not enter in. Life on board a yacht, too, is more isolated, more compact, if I may use the word, than life in a camp, where everything



Florentine Chair

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is open, even to the squirrels and the birds. Comfort can then be indulged with propriety and without the sacrifice of any sense of freedom in a camp, a solitary cabin in the woods, or on a yacht; but the choice of materials for providing that comfort or for introducing the beautiful must vary with each environment. So must the choice of materials used in decoration. A woman I know, who understands this question thoroughly, will never, for instance, permit geraniums in the boxes on the porches of an Adirondack camp, nor the boxes themselves to be made of porcelain, tiles, or any other imported material. The fruits and vegetables consumed on her table come from a distance, since they help to nourish the physical man. Her table decorations, however, are of ferns, not garden flowers.

Whatever the life of the individual, whether it represents a growing prosperity, an enlarging, or a cramping, of means, a woman must prove her knowledge of requirements in still another way,—in the provision made for her servants, and in the number of those she provides for the running of her house. When a home is planned and furnished, she must not only know what to do for the well-being of those under her, for their physical comfort, their recreation, and their discipline, but she must know what their conduct should be, not only in the care of her personal belongings, but in the care of her guests, so that they represent her worthily, as servants should, expressing the spirit of her house, whatever its spirit may be, whether one of hospi-

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talities, dignity, reserve, or magnificence. If she entertains on a large scale, she must know what entertaining should be, how to train her maid for her cloak-room, and her butler for her dining-room. She must know even better than they what silver should go on her sideboard, what linen on her table, what flowers in her vases, and how tea should be served in the afternoon; or how a glass of sherry and a biscuit should be carried to the exhausted old lady who has come to make an afternoon visit.



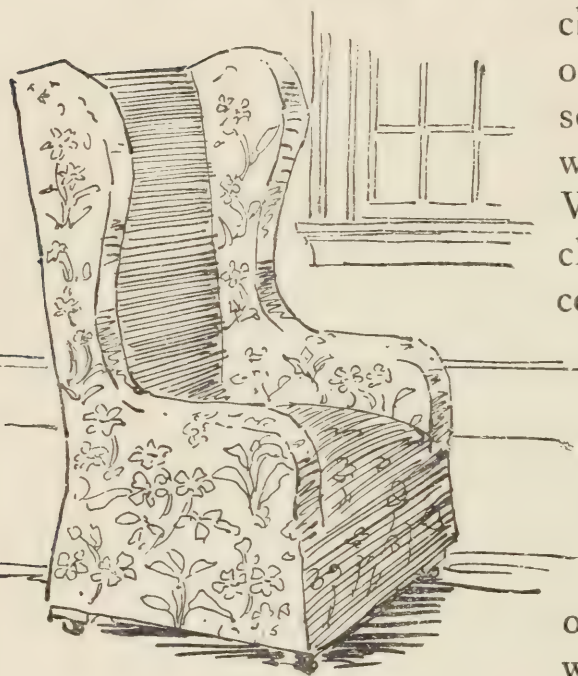
Small Table
Tea-tray with legs
and handles.

She should know these things whether she were rich or poor; whether she had twenty domestics to carry out her wishes, or the necessity were hers of preserving the refinements with the help of but one — or none; whether she had an apartment or a house; whether a formal or an informal manner of living were hers. And in whatever condition of splendor or of simplicity she lived, she would still have her own views, tastes, and sympathies to consider. The question of individuality is paramount. There is no real decoration of the home without it, however splendid the environment. A house decorated to order, and lacking this individual touch, is often little better than a railway station.

You, as a householder and a woman, must know just what your house is to stand for, what of yourself you want to express in it and through it. Suppose that your whole idea was to have a hospitable

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home, one with wide welcoming doors open to every friend ; a home in which those who came were made at ease and from which they went away refreshed. Suppose, I say, that you began your house with this idea. Could you, if this were so, imagine your keeping in your parlor an uncomfortable



Cosey Chair

chair, with its legs too short or too long, and its back bent so that no one could sit in it without breaking his own? Were you sincere in your claim to the hospitable spirit, could you rest content until you had substituted another chair for that one entailing such universal discomfort? Could you ever hope to understand anything about the decoration of the home if you went on ignoring details like these?

Suppose, again, that you were proud of a certain lamp in your room, but that your visitors were always wriggling to get away from its glare — holding up a fan or a pamphlet to protect the eyes. What sort of hospitality would be yours if you permitted the lamp to remain? In the arrangement of your lamps, as in that of your chairs, to be truly complementary to the spirit and the purport of your home, you should study the needs of every inmate.

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Lamps should not be in out-of-the-way corners when one wants to read, nor in places where the light would be wearisome if people cared only to talk. Chairs should be placed where they provide the most comfort. The decoration of a home means nothing but a consideration of the requirements of a family or its guests, providing for them in the best and most felicitous manner possible.

I know a large, beautifully proportioned, country-house hall, panelled in oak, with heavy timbers in the ceiling. It is as empty as lower Broadway after midnight. "I have never known what to do with it," its prosperous owner sighed in my ear. Never known what to do with it, I thought; and yet she has lived in that house for years. She has a husband, too, and a house full of young children, besides an unlimited bank account and a few friends.

I can, in imagination, see the members of her household all go skipping through that gloomy hall when twilight has fallen or when dinner is over, and so on into the one room really comfortable in her house, — the library; which is not a library, since every one sits in it and there is not a corner quiet enough for a book. She has never known what to do with her hall, because she has never known what she wanted that hall to do for her. She has never had any ideas to express in it. Yet she might, out of mere politeness, as a compliment to her guests or to her family, but especially to her guests, who pass through, have long ago filled it with fine old carved



Lamp shade made
of a square of crepe
paper with a hole
in the centre. —

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chests (she can afford to buy them). She could have had a fire burning on its ample hearth, its blaze adding a note of welcoming color. She could have introduced pictures, bronzes, plants. Plants are beautiful anywhere.

I have said just above, "especially the guests," for I believe that no decoration of a house can be beautiful which ignores the comfort and the well-being of those who are invited within its portals. Man is a social being. As he ascends in the scale of civilization, his social needs become more and more defined. He must not live for himself alone, neither should he build his house without consideration of his fellow-beings. Of course, by making his own life full, he equips himself for enriching that of others; but the two processes should go side by side, in obedience to interdependent obligations and necessities. The best architects understand this. They consider the human relations, the graces and the charms of life, whether they are designing the simplest of parlors or the most splendid of reception-rooms. They understand that something besides the formal salutations of a hostess should welcome her guests to a ball; that a way of approach to her side should be made easy, and the way from it; the way also of loitering with one friend or of joining another; that at every step there should be beguilement and pleasure for the eye and comfort for the body. The true spirit of decoration leaves none of these questions neglected, and the eternal quest of the home-lover should be for

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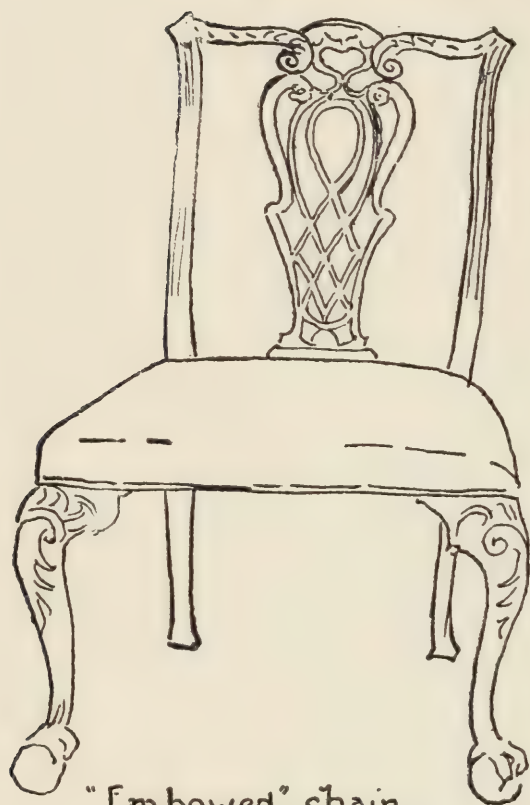
the best means by which these various requirements could be met. To arrange and rearrange until the desideratum is reached, is the business of all those who are interested in the decoration of homes, whether simple or elaborate. Wall-papers, curtains, rugs, and stuffs for upholstery are so many tools whereby the decorator obtains the atmosphere he desires. And the question of atmosphere will not always come from a successful handling of these instruments. You may purchase the interior decorations of a palace and set them up in your house, and find the result sadly lacking in harmony, in dignity. The setting should never be out of keeping with the life that is to be lived before it: only by the harmony of the two can you arrive at the best results.

For instance, should you, as I said, desire above all other things to be hospitable, to have your house express welcome, you must not suppose that this means a throwing down of all the barriers in order to admit each visitor to the intimacies. "We treat you as one of the family," a certain woman once said to a visitor. But to be treated as one of the family, this visitor afterwards discovered, was to be made absolutely and thoroughly uncomfortable.

And here a delicate subject is touched upon, since there are many who urge that true hospitality consists in giving to guests only that to which you yourself are accustomed every day; only such a dinner as you would eat alone; only such a chair as that in which you would be comfortable. "What

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is good enough for me is good enough for my friends," the vulgar man expresses it. These persons would have no room for the reception of vis-



"Embowed" chair.

1727

Yule Library

itors except one used in the daily life of the family. But it seems to me that the hospitable instinct has to do only with the comfort and well-being of others, and that if it means anything it means giving to others your best. If, on the other hand, your guest wants only what you have, wants the intimacies and you want to admit him to them, then by all means do as he desires. But if your guest wants to make a formal visit when he comes, a family living-room is not the room in which that formal visit should be made.

At one time in this country there was a great outcry against the "best parlors" of small country houses, those vault-like chambers in which no sun ever shone, and into which the occasional visitor was invariably ushered, to shiver or to wilt according to his susceptibility or powers of resistance. The reaction away from these awful places, with their cold, musty odors, carried us into parlors in which it was obligatory to display some sign of having but that very

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instant been vacated by a mistress. It was fashionable to see an open book laid upside down on a sofa, or a few sheets of music spread carelessly on the open piano, and I remember a certain parlor in Boston in which a lady's worsted work always appeared on a particular table, a particular chair being drawn up by it. That was in the days when Morris had begun to educate the people in questions of beauty and when the rage of crewels began, especially for the greens, the olives, and dull golds. So this was why the work-bag of the lady in Boston was always left open on a table and showed the long strands of greens and olives in her crewels laid flat on a piece of spotless linen. How well I remember them! Indeed, why should I have forgotten them? I saw the same strands week after week throughout an entire winter. Everybody else in Boston knew those crewels, too. They used to remind me of the baby's little linen shirt which Becky Sharp kept in her work-basket on her drawing-room table. She never sewed on the shirt except when she wanted to make an impression, and her son Rawdon was a boy in trousers before it was half finished.

Another departure carried us away from parlors and living-rooms into reception-rooms furnished at great cost and hung with pictures, every effort being made to create an impression of elegance in them. But how dreary and unlivable and pretentious were these costly reception-rooms, almost as unendurable as the best parlors of an earlier generation. All of

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which goes to prove that the subject is absorbing and not easy of solution, and that only as men and women grow in grace and cultivation and in true consideration of their neighbors can we hope to arrive at that point where beauty and grace and all the hospitable virtues can be expressed within the limitations prescribed by formal codes. But then, after all, what else is art but a constant endeavor to do this very thing, to express beauty through limitations, and to do so with felicity?

There is a last word I would like to say about requirements. It seems to me that were the subject understood better, envy of one's neighbors would disappear, and the idle striving to imitate or outdo his splendor. We would understand that to the householder of conspicuous possession, fine apartments were a necessity, as they would not be to those in humbler places. Moreover, our feelings would not be so easily injured, since an understanding of requirements would quicken our understanding of the many differences of condition in life.



Fine Colonial Tea Service of silver.

Date 1798.

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

CHAPTER II

THE METHOD OF PROCEDURE

IN planning or furnishing a dwelling, whatever or wherever it may be, you must be governed by three considerations, — what you want, what you need, what you can have.

I have put these considerations in what seems to me their rightful order, because, in every departure that is made, each person begins by wanting certain things, which is quite different from needing them, and altogether different from being able to possess them. Your wants may be legitimate and rational, or selfish and vain, but whatever they are, they express *you*. If they express the best in you, you should strive to let them guide you even when satisfying only your needs. Your needs, however, will vary according to your environment, your occupation, or profession, the place which you occupy in the world, and ultimately the amount of money which you are able to expend.

The question of requirements discussed in the previous chapter, then, must govern you in your choice of a dwelling-place. But that choice made, and a habitation provided, you are at once confronted with the problem of how to furnish and appoint the hall-ways and rooms of your house.

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As no man can live without eating and sleeping, the logical order of furnishing would compel you to begin with those departments in which provision is made for bodily necessities. All that follows afterward in the appointing of the home must take cognizance of your mental and moral needs, intellectual and artistic sympathies, and of those particular tastes and accomplishments which have been developed in special directions. This is as it should be, since the whole purpose of life is growth. Bed-rooms, kitchens, and dining-rooms are arranged first, that growth may take place in one essential direction, and make for the increase of the mental and physical strength upon which rests the foundation of success. Drawing-rooms, libraries, and music-rooms, on the other hand, provide for a different order of necessities. Development here takes place in the graces and amenities of life, in an appreciation of the arts. This is really the reason why the walls of your dining-room may be treated in one way, and the walls of a living-room or a parlor in another. The dining-room is a place for eating. Its purpose is defined. But the living-room, or the one parlor, is a place for recreation, where new interests are, or should be, introduced constantly — new books, new pictures, new pieces of furniture, perhaps, and certainly, if there are young people, new amusements and pleasures. A wall-paper of pronounced and obtrusive character, then, is undesirable in a family living-room. Its tendency would be to keep everything about it bound

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down to its level. A beautiful and artistic wall-hanging might represent a selection as unfortunate, if it brought the room up to so high a key that nothing of homelier interest ther a lady's work-bag, book — without de Neither a family living-room nor its mistress should have delicate a nature that day interests jar. Neither fair and good for human nature's daily food."

could appear — neither a paper-bound destroying the scheme.

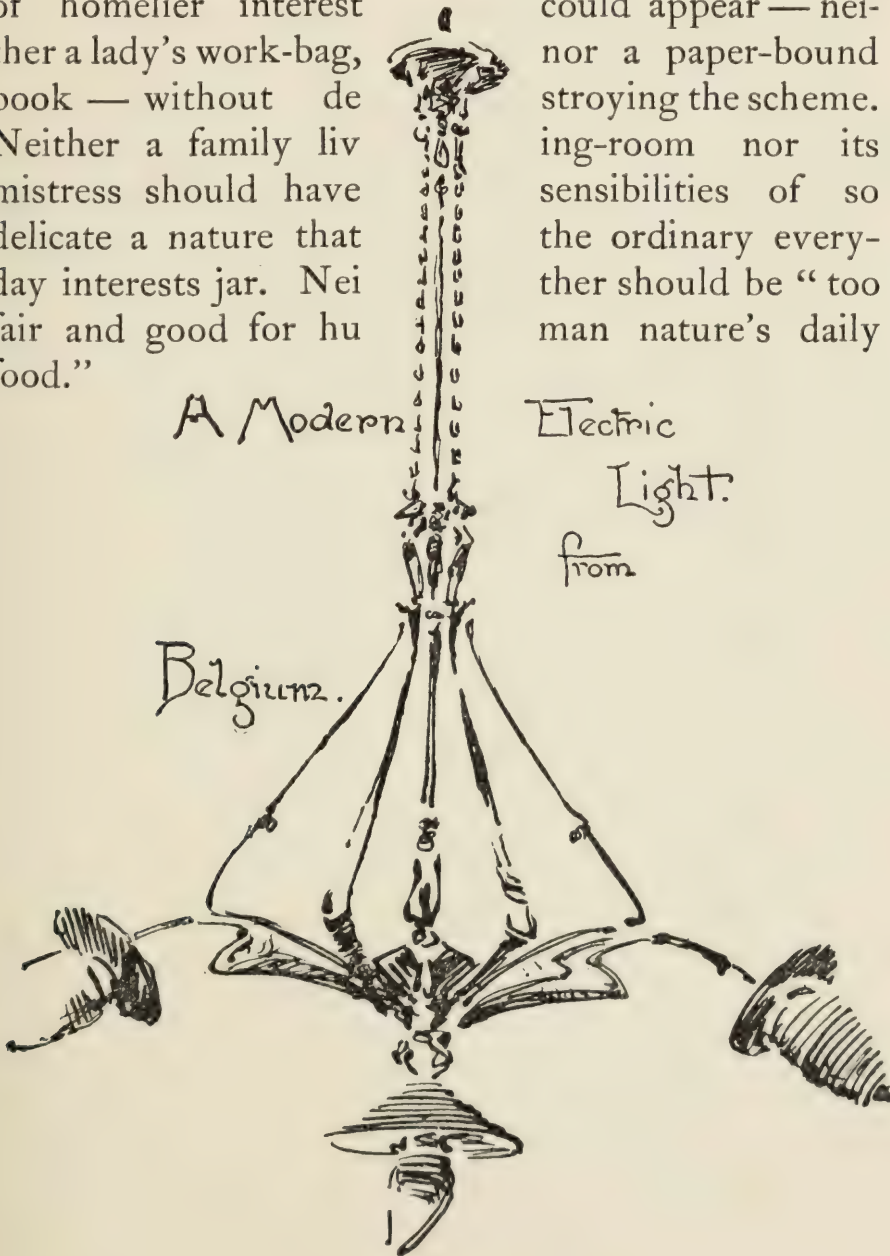
A Modern

Electric

Light.

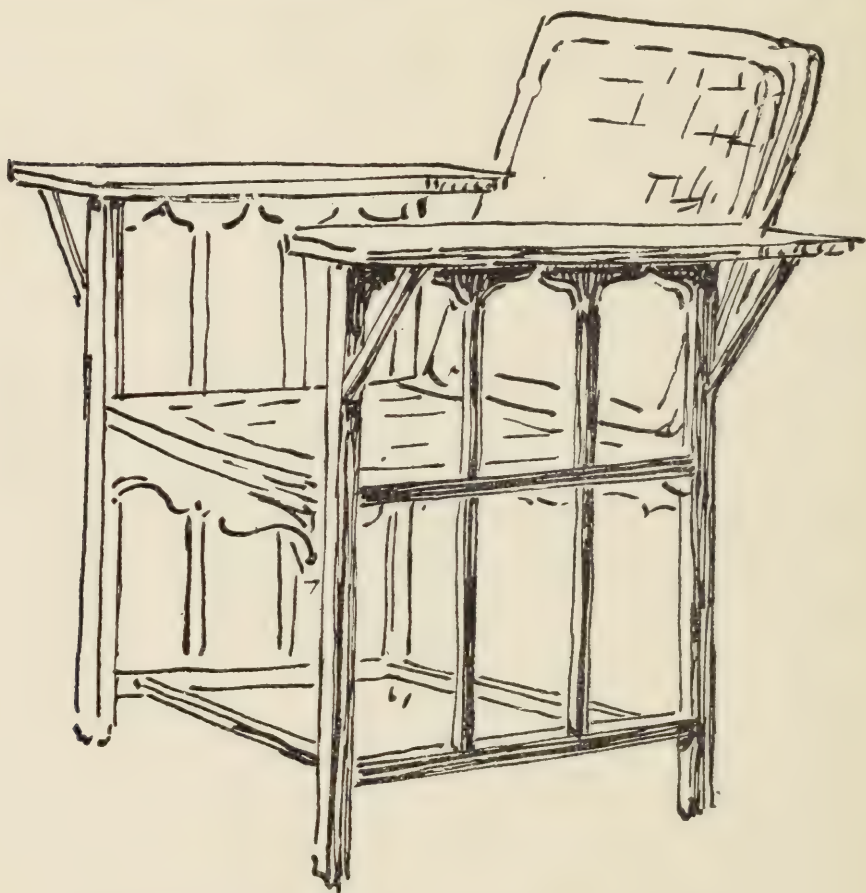
from

Belgium.



HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

If you have but one room for recreation, never furnish it when beginning your housekeeping. In so doing you may find yourself perpetually cramped



Modern chair of oak (stained dark)
used also without the back.

by some early expression of yourself, from which you would find it as difficult to grow away, as men find it difficult to escape the records of a youthful misdemeanor. A parlor with a flowered carpet, white lace curtains falling straight, shining green

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wall-paper with pink roses, and — (that pride of some purchasers) a whole suit of furniture made of a tufted cotton-back satin; here and there about the room, perhaps, a gilt chair or table with brass legs, or a marble-top table — such a parlor would mean for you a place from which there could be no escape, no chance of rising to better things, no opportunity for expansion. Its case would be hopeless. Nothing could be done with it without a revolution, a complete overthrow, a getting back to first principles. If a man must wax in strength and stature, some chance must be left him in which to expand. “What are you looking for?” said the lady of the house to a friend, who, instead of admiring a room crowded with beautiful things, stood silently gazing about her. “A place for your soul to grow in,” was the answer.

If in building you intend to reproduce a given period, consultation with a good designer is imperative. He will tell you what the proportions of your room should be — decide the height of your doors and windows, the character of your fireplace, and the special treatment of your wall-surface and ceiling. “Decoration is always subservient to proportion,” says a writer on the subject, “and a room, whatever its decoration may be, must represent the style to which its proportions belong. The less cannot include the greater. Unfortunately, it is usually by ornamental details, rather than by proportion, that people distinguish one style from another. To many persons, garlands,

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bow-knots, quivers, and a great deal of gilding represent the Louis XVI style ; if they object to these, they condemn the style. To an architect familiar with the subject, the same style means something absolutely different. He knows that a Louis XVI room may exist without any of these, and he often deprecates them as representing the cheaper and more trivial effects of the period — those that have most helped to vulgarize it. In nine cases out of ten his use of them is a concession to the client who, having asked for a Louis XVI room, would not know he had got it with these details left out.”

The simple possession of some Louis XVI hangings, therefore, is not sufficient to give you a Louis XVI room. Nor can an Empire curtain, sofas, and chairs transform the parlor of an ordinary city house into a room of the Napoleonic period. Neither can the presence of a few heavy draperies, low tables, perforated brass vases, and lamps make for an American house a Turkish interior. I wish the attempt were not so often made. There are, to be sure, certain studios, boys’ rooms, and dens, into which these materials may be introduced with propriety ; but when finished these rooms should suggest unpretentious motives.

If you have made no study of decoration, you should have confidence in your architect. To hamper him with your little insistences, demanding that he use certain possessions for which you may have a sentiment, but which do not belong to the period, is to handicap him at every turn. But if

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you have made a study of the subject and your tastes and sympathies are thoroughly established, then you and your architect can work together. Upon you in such cases depends the ultimate selection of designs, the details of cornice and ceiling, of materials and colors, which he submits for your approval. To you, too, may fall the choice of the various stuffs and hangings. When such a responsibility is yours, try first to secure the genuine articles; failing these, select designs copied from the best examples of the proper period, but never rest content with a search through modern shops and a purchase of those imitations of particular periods with which the manufacturers have filled the market. Books giving complete, carefully illustrated descriptions of the architectural details of the decorations and furniture of each different period are to be had. You should study these, even if you have travelled and observed extensively. For if the privilege of following your own taste be yours, in the building of a house possessing architectural excellence your obligation is great. The work should be undertaken seriously; intrusted to hands not only capable of carrying your ideas to a satisfactory conclusion, but of guiding you to a perception of still better things. Yours is not a privilege to be regarded lightly. If your house be beautiful, you have made a contribution to the world.

Most of us must inhabit houses already modelled on prescribed lines, until we have in town a dreary monotony of brown stone fronts and unbroken

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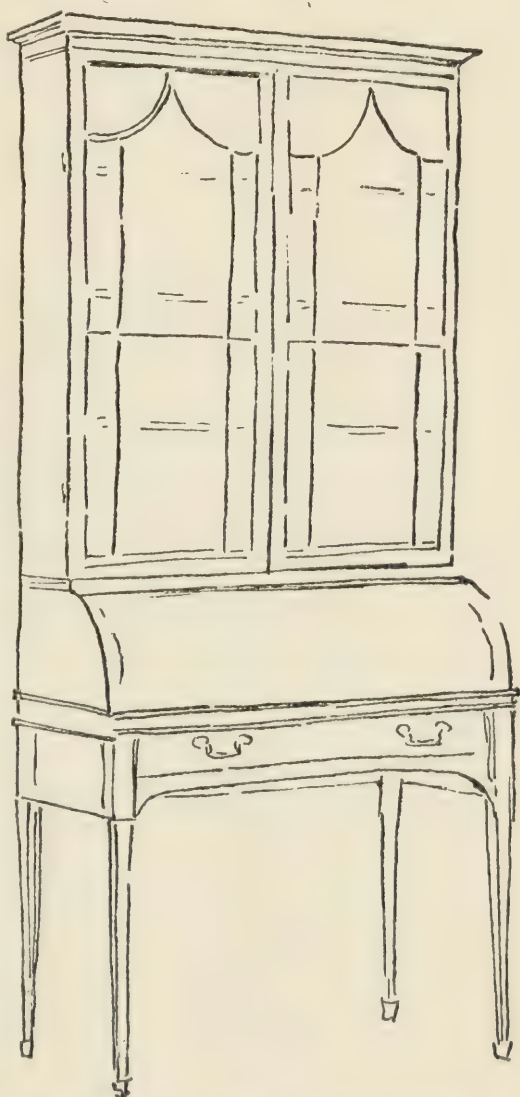
wall surfaces, and in country districts the hopelessness of narrow halls and stairs, front and back parlors exactly alike, and bedrooms above, with mantel shelves over hot-air registers.

The simplest form of wall-surface, the one often suggested as a problem in decoration, is that left by the builder as a plain surface of plaster or cement filling the places between the doors, windows, and fireplace. It can be treated exactly as the judgment of the owner dictates. It can be painted, white-washed, calcimined, covered with paper or with a textile, — burlaps, silks, cretonnes, or tapestry. It can be panelled in wood, covered with leather or marble, or hung with silks and embroideries. Each individual decides these questions according to her means and the use for which she wishes the room. In one intended for pictures she wants no distractions on the wall in the way of flowers, strong colors, or obtrusive designs. If a picture is worthy at all of a place on the walls, it should be spared the affront of discordant surroundings. The owner of "A Dutch Tulip Garden" would be guilty of an unpardonable crime were she to hang it over paper already covered with tulips, good as that tulip paper might be ; or to hang a Venetian sketch with its delicacy and transparency of tone — or a picture of Bermuda with pale colored skies and whitewashed houses — on vivid crimson or blue papers. Yet the same sort of folly is being committed every day by people who cover their walls with flowered papers and sketches in water-colors.

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In any room intended for reading and study, walls covered with blossoms, or intricate, over-accentuated designs, are distracting and unsatisfactory. Books are in themselves a decoration. The colors of their bindings,—reds, greens, blues, and gold,—broken by the tawny hue of old calf, have richness of tone. In those libraries in which the shelves do not run to the ceiling, a plain background above the shelves is a necessity, primarily on account of the books, but also as a background for the busts, pictures, or casts which you may also introduce. In living-rooms and parlors, where pictures, brasses, and pottery are introduced, an unobtrusive wall color is a necessity.

In dining-rooms the question of a background for the objects on the walls need not be so carefully considered. A dining-room may be well appointed with nothing displayed in it but the glass and silver. In bedrooms, light-flowered or striped papers, with colors suggesting bright-



Adam Secretary Bookcase

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

ness, repose, and daintiness, are of paramount importance.

In a room that is long and narrow, a large-figured or flowered paper only accentuates the length, until the room is made to look like the inside of a cable-car. Treat it with vertical stripes of two tones softly merging into each other. A flowered or figured material over the windows at the end will shorten the room, bringing the most distant point nearer to you. If you are committed to a large-flowered paper, plain hangings of quiet tone should be put over the windows at the end. When the end of the room is occupied by a blank wall-space, a mirror, with plants arranged as a foreground, answers a good purpose, provided the reflections in the mirror are studied and the end of the room brought nearer, the eye not being enticed to a greater distance.

The wood-work of a room — the door and window casings, the base, even the picture-moulding — must be considered in relation to the covering to be chosen for the walls. If on moving into a house you are committed to one kind of wood-work (some landlords will permit none of theirs to be changed), select your paper with reference to it. Red, for instance, may do very well if the wood be white, but it is out of the question with light oak. On the other hand, white wood-work may be an impossibility with red, or any dark paper, because its lines may be bad. A dark paper would throw it into too strong relief, making a series of broken and distracting streaks distributed without grace or symmetry.

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If so situated, your business should be to subdue the unfortunate conditions, so that they may be forgotten. If the house were yours, you might do this by painting the wood-work to match the walls, or a shade darker. You cannot do this if the paper be red. Red wood-work and paper combined would be heavy. When a red paper is desired, the trim, of course, might be scraped and stained, — so expensive an operation that perhaps a wiser course would be to choose a different color. Always bear in mind, however, that the wood-work frames the wall-covering, and that its color must never be ignored. It often happens, unfortunately, that the wall-space is divided by a series of doors and windows distributed without regard to symmetry or proportion. Thus, there may be at times many doors and a single window in a room, these openings having been managed awkwardly when additions were made to the house. Doors and windows in a room are often an advantage in breaking up the lines of a long bare wall, if the composition of the sides of the room is well studied. An ingenious treatment of superfluous doors in an apartment — doors which mean nothing because unused — will be found in illustration on page 31, where old India shawls have been hung as backgrounds for plaster casts or brasses and coppers. A mirror is always effective. Mirrors have been almost universally adopted as a means of improving rooms of small size, where the need of suggesting at least greater breathing space is imperative. Palms may be

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grouped in front of them, and sofas so arranged that no one thinks of them, but is unconsciously satisfied with the feeling of space.

On no account commit yourself to a wall-paper until you have brought home a generous sample and have lived with it in your house for several days. Hang it up and study it from several points of view; turn away and forget it, then turn round again suddenly and see how its color and design impress you, — whether pleasantly or with a shock; put two widths together and notice how the pattern repeats; try it back of your sofas and pictures; see it in daylight and at night. It may have seemed to you delightful when hanging in the shop, and yet prove itself to be the most uncomfortable of companions at home; like some acquaintance made in summer, — charming enough on a hotel piazza, or on his native heath — altogether intolerable upon longer and more intimate acquaintance.

And this brings me to another point, — one to be still more strongly urged. Before beginning a hunt for papers, save yourself trouble by making a list and entering on it the things which you should avoid.

At the head of this list place papers with gilt figures; until they have been tried no one can know the agonies they are capable of inspiring. They are one thing to-day and another to-morrow. They have no stability, no surety. They are forever deceiving you. They are bright and promising in one light, gloomy and repellant in another.

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They have no repose ; they permit none. You may arrange a corner carefully, having reference to such a paper as its background. Change your seat and look at your corner from another side. Everything is wrong !

Put second on your list a paper with a shining, smooth surface. It can be as bad as a polished tin. It holds no light, softens no reflection, takes on no tone : it is hard and repellent always.

Next on your "Index Purgatorium" put the ordinary frieze that repeats a paper in color and design, then straggles off into lighter tones above. This frieze, you may be sure, is bad. You want none of it. You can run your paper up to your ceiling, if you desire, or bring your ceiling down to it. The every-day frieze is a mistake ; is indeed no longer used by the best decorators.

I speak in no language of exaggeration when I say that my heart has often ached for women in different parts of the country who have sent me samples of the paper chosen for their walls, their frieze, and their ceilings. With what pride these samples have been submitted at times ! And how impossible they have proved to be, although their purchasers have been assured they all "went well together." It used to take every bit of my courage to declare against them. Now and then, however, a woman would write to me that she was in despair. "It all sounded so well, this particular combination," she would say in her letter, "but now that the papers are hung I cannot bear to go

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into the room. My husband and I keep the door shut. What shall we do to make the room bearable?" And I would unfold her samples, spread them out before me, and not wonder at her suffering; indeed, I have generally found my respect



Hepplewhite Chair

grow for the woman, and for the husband capable of sympathizing with her mistake. "The mark of rank in nature" is certainly the "capacity for pain." Her pain proved her excellence. There is always hope for those like her: I have tested and tried, but never found them wanting, even when I counselled new papers, going without a dinner or two, if necessary, in order to pay for them. None of those truly craving the beautiful are unwilling to deny themselves to attain it; to starve

gracefully and cheerfully and silently — exulting in the possession of the beauty gained. Many a meal the impecunious book-lover denies himself to defray the cost of a special volume; many a luncheon the restricted home-lover goes without to pay for a beautiful hanging or a bit of old mahogany that will add gladness to her days. Many a shabby hat has been worn to gain the price of a new sofa cushion. And this is as it should be, and not foolish. In our homes we work for more than ephemeral pleasures.

We must remember that as the color-schemes of individual rooms are studied, so those of whole

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houses must be studied in relation to each other, that one room need not be thrown out of harmony with another. Thus in a certain country house the owner determined to permit no paper or picture that did not express a feeling for nature, and no appointment that suggested care. Her house is green and white throughout, but the green of each room is the green of some tree or some bush. Even her lamp-shades show green on a white ground. In one case, for instance, the green of the pine-tree enters in as a design of needles and cones on the shade. No pictures are permitted in certain rooms that do not suggest forest interiors. The effect is by no means monotonous, but cool and refreshing, and she has surrounded herself with a delightfully original expression of her own individuality.

Cartridge papers, with their uneven surfaces which break the light, have stood the test of many experiments. Improved examples of this paper are made. In a more expensive material nothing in the way of a wall-covering has yet been manufactured so satisfactory for a variety of purposes as a burlaps. It adapts itself to so many different conditions. Architects use it as a background for the finest tapestries. It appears in beautiful libraries; it is congenial in simple surroundings. It fades delightfully. It never annoys you by the reflection for which you have not asked. It can be painted, stained, or treated with a wash of gold. It is easily kept clean with a wet rag and

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ammonia. Moreover, — and this really recommends it most highly, — it comes in good colors, the manufacturers having devoted much attention to the subject; though more expensive than ordinary papers, it lasts longer.

Burlaps is put on like paper. Denim can be put on in the same way. When cretonnes, brocades, and costly stuffs are used, the habit is to employ fine, invisible brass nails, which are afterwards concealed by a gimp. When woods are employed on a wall the services of a carpenter are necessary. He can at any time ceil an ordinary room with pine, walls and ceiling alike. Rooms treated in this way are especially desirable in camps, in cabins, or in simple country-house dining-rooms and bedrooms; those, for instance, built in out-of-the way places, where the householder wants to save herself the trouble of papers. The soft browns and yellows of the grain of the wood are agreeable, lending themselves to a variety of hangings. It can be stained if desired. Sometimes, for the sake of variety, it can be made to stop a foot or so below the ceiling, the frieze being filled with a piece of chintz or calico. I know a young girl's bedroom so treated in the Catskills. She repeated the chintz of her frieze in the hangings of her bed, on the covers of her low window-seats, and again in her curtains. Their colors were charming with the simple, unpainted pine.

A carpenter can make a wainscoting which may

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be painted white or stained. When wood is impossible, a dado of some stuff, or burlaps, or velours, may, in ordinary houses, take the place of the wood. The object of either is twofold, — to lift the wall-decoration to a level with the eye, and to form a background for the pieces of furniture placed against it. Nothing, for instance, is so ugly as a long, narrow room with a very light paper running down to the base-board, while against this paper and all around the room pieces of dark furniture are shown, — tables and chairs with slim legs. One is always seeing the light walls between the legs. The eye is distracted, whereas the object should be to leave the eye free to rest upon or to follow the wall-decorations above, — the pictures or bronzes. Low bookcases running around a room serve the same purpose, and like a wainscoting or a dado, keep the lower part of the room as it should be kept, in a lower key.

When costly woods are employed on a wall, or when marbles appear, an architect or designer must be consulted. The woods generally used are French walnut, mahogany, chestnut, oak, brown ash, California redwood. These woods may appear as a wainscoting, be made to run all the way to the ceiling, or, stopping a few feet below, be finished with a shelf or moulding under a frieze of plaster, Spanish leather, tapestry, stucco, silk, or occasionally a piece of cretonne of particularly good color or design. When wood is put to other uses and elaborate designs are followed for the inlay of

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mirrors, tapestry, silk, or brocades, the whole room must be carefully designed, and by an artist. A room, so treated, is of itself the finished whole. No liberties should be taken with it. No pictures should be hung on its walls at the whim of the householder, and never unless a space has been specially created for such a purpose by the architect, and the design of the wood or stucco has been made to form the frame of that which is to be placed in it.

The every-day householder should attempt no elaborations of her ceilings. When she desires beams or panels, or stucco on her ceiling, she should seek the guidance of a well-trained designer. Had builders and contractors been as careful, we might have been spared the horror of many a ceiling in the old-fashioned houses, — coves, cornices, and ornate plaster scrolls treated with applications of fantastic tints. A misunderstanding of this subject, indeed, swept a generation of moneyed people off their feet, leaving us to deplore the results which still afflict us long after their perpetrators are dead and gone. One man had his ceilings painted to reproduce the floral designs of his carpet, so that one walked through his rooms with a dizzying sense of being suspended in mid-air, flowers above and flowers below, or, worse still, of not knowing whether one were walking quite in the proper place — everything seemed topsy-turvy. Another man painted his ceiling to look like “the blue vault on high” — the blue solid and studded with gilt stars.

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Many years are required for a recovery from evil examples like these, especially when they have been all about us. Bad colors, proportions which defy every law of grace or beauty, over-elaboration of the trivial, if they have been part of the environment in which we have been born and bred, come to be accepted as our standard. Time seems to have sanctioned their use, the approval of our ancestors has given them weight and value. A more enlightened generation suffers and questions, but only a revolutionist or a prophet can bring about a new order. For this reason we have considered stucco and stencilled ceilings a necessity, and have been long discovering the beauty of simplicity in contrast to elaborations not directed by an experienced touch.

The ceilings of an ordinary country or town house should be treated with great discretion; never trusted to a painter who will insist on some stencilled design for which he has a partiality. If the ceiling is low, the effect of such a design is of something pressing down on the head. The ordinary ceiling ought never to be accentuated. When both the walls and the wood-work of the room are of one tone—a green, for instance—the ceiling should be slightly tinted with green, but merely enough of it used to carry the tone away from the white. If, on the other hand, the walls are green and the wood-work is white, then the ceiling should be white. Height is diminished by bringing the ceiling color down to the picture-moulding. The

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ceiling can then be finished with a wash or covered with a paper. In some rooms a flowered paper is used in this way, the color of the paper below repeating that of some detail in the ceiling-paper. This treatment is best suited to bedrooms, bathrooms, and parlors. A paper showing flowers or foliage too heavily massed, without space between, is not desirable. The idea is to produce the impression of an arbor with vines interlaced overhead. A flowered paper of conventional design can be used on the ceiling where a decoration of bands or figures would be impossible. The flowers would give an idea of space overhead, while the stencilled design would tend to oppress you as though a box-cover had been put over your head.

When the room is ready for the furniture and hangings, all the tact of the householder will be required. She must never be impatient of results nor think that she has attained her object with a first trial. She must *live* in a room to make it thoroughly habitable, live there in imagination as well as in person. She must shift her furniture about, try it in this place and that, and never rest until she is satisfied. When a room is small she must strive for compactness ; when it is large, for comfort — but whatever she does she must not only work with a reason for each act and selection she may make, but she must be able to prove her reason for every move. She must, too, interest herself constantly with a question of vistas, until the various openings from her rooms frame a series of pictures. To do

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this she must sit in different parts of a room and study effects through open doorways, or at the end of some line of division. If a mirror is hung, the mirror must be full of pleasant reflections. Just as the French in the country put statues at the end of avenues so that the eye may be carried to something which will make an agreeable resting-place, she must see to it that in her house the vision is led to nothing suggesting discomfort or unpleasantness. I was once in a house in which several rooms opened out of each other. The colors were charming, the arrangement tactful and agreeable, except for one blot. In an angle near the doorway of the farthest room, a large blue jar, in perfect harmony with the room in which it was placed, formed a discordant note with the lovely color combinations of the intervening chambers. As this blue jar was at the end of the line of vision, I could see nothing else, and still more unfortunately, when I turned away I could remember nothing else — none of the lovely carvings, none of the hangings — only that miserable blue jar at the end of the vista.

What I have said in this chapter by way of counsel will fail to help the individual if she is reluctant to discard superfluous things, not only when arranging a house for the first time, but as she lives in it from day to day. Every house, however humble, however exalted above its surroundings, ought to be provided with some closet, or chest of drawers, or store-room, some one receptacle large

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enough to hold all that is ugly and superfluous, everything that is out of key, and everything that is jarring. Things of this character may come as heirlooms, as Christmas presents, as tokens of devoted attachment from friends who have no understanding of beauty, of propriety, or of the proper relations of one object to another. Rubbish of this sort must not be permitted to remain. A celebrated sculptor used to make it a rule every Sunday morning to go about his house and get rid of the unnecessary and the out-of-key. He regarded his house as an artist his work, as we should all regard whatever object we undertake to perfect, never failing in a ceaseless vigilance, nor a constant going back to old ideals, first impressions, the better to perfect their expression.

The injured feelings of our dear ones may have to be considered in this heroic performance. Sentiment hampers us in our effort to attain true excellence in decoration; we must not allow ourselves to be influenced. To cast out all offending matter, should be the rule, before we have a chance to be reconciled to it or are beguiled into building upon bad foundations.

I am tempted to quote a letter of advice written by a woman who had succeeded in making her home beautiful. Her method of procedure is one which other women might adopt to advantage.

“You ask me how I went to work. I began by loving and longing for a home with an eagerness I cannot describe, and I wanted that home to be to

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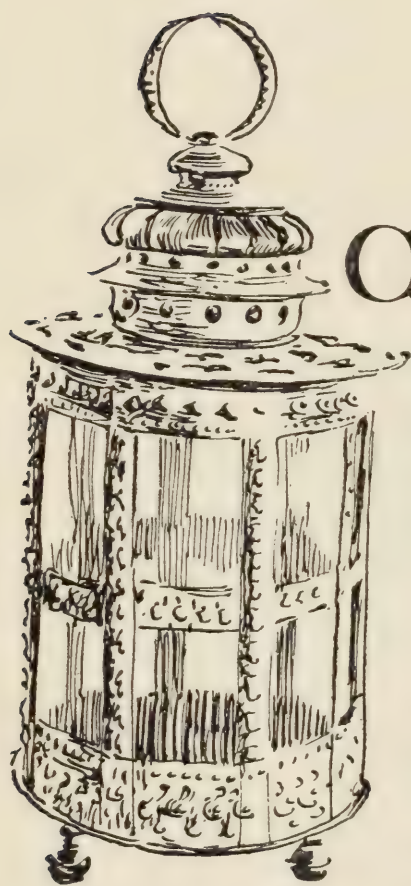
those whom I welcomed to it not only a refuge, but a rest, a refreshment, a delight. I had all this in the home in which I lived as a young person. I took for granted such a place was easy to make when I began. But!— Mine used to look so lonely, in the first place. None of the things I put in it seemed right. I welcomed my guests, but I felt their discomfort. I saw when lights in their eyes bothered them. I took the chairs they vacated when they left, and saw what ugly vistas another room presented. I had a hideous gilt paper on my wall that my landlord would not change. Everything showed badly against it. So I began to study into the question. I threw away ruthlessly all the things which I knew were bad, but to which I had accustomed myself. I said I would have empty rooms rather than hideous ones. The great secret of growth is to rid one's self of things which by-and-by are going to contaminate one's taste. It is like plucking out the eye that offends you. I used to go about studying every house I saw. If I saw anything that grated on me, I tried to think why it was, and then I avoided it in mine. If I found something good, and it was appropriate to my surroundings, I tried to get it. But I always studied into the reasons. For instance, I knew that gilt filigree chairs in a room meant for comfort, or in one where books and pictures prevailed, must be bad, since they were uncomfortable to sit on, and since they were too unsubstantial and too palpably an attempt at elegance to place in a room in which

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the work of some good artist was on the walls or the books of some great author on the shelf. I did not want gilt filigree chairs, therefore, any more than I should have wanted to wear celluloid belts or gaudy jewelry. I read and studied every picture of any interior I saw, always keeping two points in view when selection was necessary — my own requirements and the proprieties. It was very easy to see that point-lace curtains or blue satin, however beautiful in themselves, would be improper for a library or a picture gallery.”

CHAPTER III

COLOR IN DECORATION



Venetian Lantern.
brass.
(used on the gondolas.)

COLOR is a mystery, a charm, an enticement. It is stimulating, depressing, enervating, or uplifting. It warms or it chills. It will irritate, take the pleasure out of everything, and even go so far as to produce — one woman assures me — acute indigestion.

Why not?

Color, like music, is a question of vibration, affecting some of our nerves more easily than others. Take, for instance, the epigastric nerve lying over the stomach, one of the most sensitive in the body: both color and sound affect it. I know people who on this nerve feel every vibration of an orchestra;

feel the vibratory waves of sound as clearly as a wind blowing against the hand. I know others who feel the vibrations from color quite as acutely, the epigastric nerve being so affected by those from a

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distasteful color that a feeling of repugnance, of illness even, is produced.

All this, of course, is nonsense to people devoid of sensitiveness, and a dubious question to those who feel cheered or depressed by different colors but have never had the explanation discussed in their presence. The fact remains, that the vibrations of color affect different persons differently.

The most marvellous instance of sensitiveness to color vibrations that I know is found in Miss Helen Keller, the deaf, dumb, and blind girl whose intellectual prowess and accomplishments never cease to astonish us. She knows color by the touch, and has tastes and predilections as strongly developed, — nay, even more strongly developed — than the average human being in full possession of all his senses. Her friends tell me that she knows the colors of her dresses, whether one is blue or brown or black; that she will go into the garden and never make a mistake between pink or white roses. She will do more — enjoy the pink for one quality, the white rose for another.

Doctors from time to time have tried to make use of these color vibrations in the cure of patients. Not many years ago we had the blue-glass craze. Invalids were immured in rooms the windows of which were filled with panes of blue glass, so that the sunlight entering through them might set the blue vibrations in motion. Occultists are always discussing the influence of color upon the mental and spiritual nature of man. “You will outgrow green,” said

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one occultist to a student in his class, and suggested faint rose tones as more elevating to the character.

• The subject is inexhaustible. My reason for touching upon it here is to suggest that color in the home has an importance irrespective of its value from an artistic point of view, or yet from the standpoint of fashion, which declares in favor of yellow walls to-day, and of green to-morrow. Many a tired woman has found a change of color in her room as refreshing as a change of air.

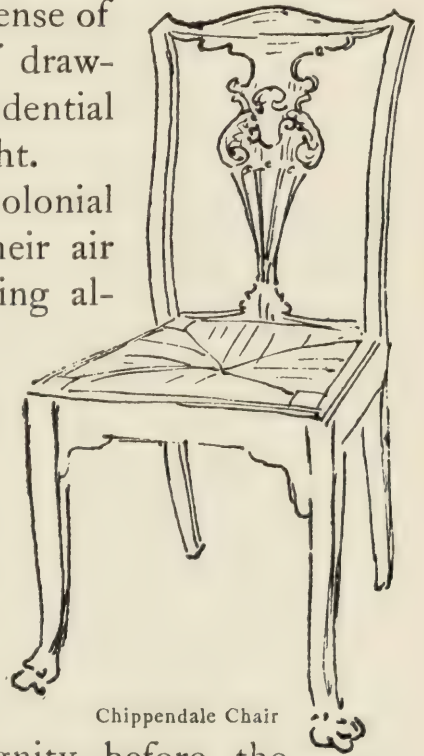
Color can do more than anything else to beautify the homes of the impecunious. Colors well arranged may take the place of richer appointments and costly furniture, in creating an impression of prosperity. Yellow is capable of accomplishing wonders in the homes of the indigent. In one case a woman earning a scanty income, counting each penny before she spent it, was supposed to have inherited a fortune because her walls, originally a dingy maroon with sprawling figures, blossomed out one day in a soft yellow paper for which the landlady paid. The rumor of her prosperity spread and carried her through several financial panics, finally establishing her in success. Yellow is like cheerfulness under affliction. It is the color which metaphysicians say works directly on the brain. Magenta could never create an impression of prosperity; neither would blue when seen by itself. If blue did, it would be because of the quality of the textile in which it appeared, — the beauty of satin or brocade. • Blue is refreshing to some, reposeful to

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others. It is always associated with daintiness. But to convey a conviction of prosperity, there is nothing in the whole scale of color so potent, so infallible, as yellow. It has an exultant quality, a joyous, sunny atmosphere; but it never gives a sense of cosiness or warmth — never one of drawing together for intimacy, for confidential touches and interchanges of thought.

Yellow helped to give the old Colonial drawing-rooms of the Hudson their air of cold and quiet reserve, of being always on their best behavior, and, like the straight-backed chairs of our ancestors, recalls an atmosphere in which no relaxation, even in private, was permitted. Long after the fortunes of those Hudson River householders were lost, these yellow drawing-rooms helped the impoverished inmates to maintain a certain proud and isolated dignity before the world. I never remember a greenish cast in those yellows, like that seen in many wall-papers of to-day, — without it the red of the beautiful old damask curtains was delightful in drawing-rooms with yellow walls.

When there is a suggestion of brown in yellow wall-paper, mahogany furniture with yellow-brown hangings is harmonious, the hangings taking up both the yellow of the walls, and the brown, broken by black, of the mahogany.



Chippendale Chair

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Blues with certain yellows are captivating. I remember a bit of old Venetian yellow brocade used as a table-cover, on which one day a blue Nankin jar was placed. The result was as delightful as the smile of a child, flashing a cheerfulness at us as we passed. In ball-rooms this color scheme has been carried out in fullest degree. Rooms of to-day, modelled upon those of French palaces, have taffeta silk curtains of golden tones edged with a blue gimp.

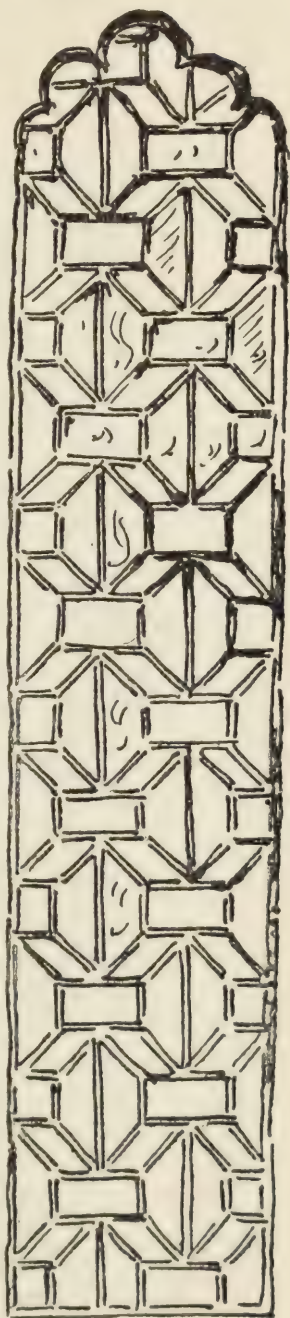
The yellow of the lemon is greenish, that of orange reddish, and you cannot mix them. It is difficult to explain to an amateur the reasons for this. People with a color-sense discover its truth without aid. I had some sofa cushions of a soft yellow shadow silk in which pinkish tones predominated. One day I introduced among them a cushion of yellow in which the green tones were strongly felt. The result was disastrous, as if a voice out of tune had joined in a chorus and spoiled it. The same feeling of discord is produced by introducing a blue-green into a room where the rest are olive-greens, or in placing two green pots together, one a blue-green and one a yellow-green. This makes it imperative for the inexperienced man or woman, desiring harmonious results, to keep to one color or set of colors. Curtains, chair-covers, and even the walls may be of the same material. Relief from monotony is secured by the introduction of pictures, books, flowers, sofa cushions.

Yellow, by the way, and not red, should be used

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in rooms where the sun does not shine. Yellow gives the effect of sunlight. When yellow is employed in the glass of a leaded pane, the effect on the gloomiest of days is of bright skies without. If blue is used in a north room, it should be relieved by white, — the soft, fluffy white of lace or sheer muslin, preferably of lace. The merest suggestion of delicate pink should appear in the room at intervals. Then you get a coloring as of white apple-blossoms against the blue of the sky. There seems a promise of coming sunshine somewhere.

Nothing would induce some persons to use red in a north room; or red with oak; or the bright new red of modern manufacture; or that with purple in it, the most hideous red of all. The old faded reds of Venetian and Spanish stuffs are not to be confused with these. They are beautiful anywhere. They are delightful, too, with dark oak. These old reds, however, are generally seen with the rich yellow of a gold braid or an embroidery. A golden thread is sure to appear. When red velvet is used to cover chairs, brass nails are introduced. These golds enhance the richness of effect. We cannot do without red. Some instinct in man makes him crave it, especially when



Good example
of simple old
leaded glass.
Haddon Hall.

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the cold begins and nature herself shows a dash of it in forest and field. It is like a stimulant. It



K.C.B.

Splendid old hanging.

Spanish Appliqué

Cloth of gold and spangles
on silk velvet of rich red.

Early Renaissance.

acts like the "trumpet call" to which the blind man, quoted by Locke, compared it. It rouses men to action and excites them to vigor. In sum-

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mer we want to get rid of it in our rooms because it looks hot; but it looks hot because it looks energetic — not reposeful as green is reposeful.

All this brings me to a point that I wish particularly to make. It is not necessary to introduce red into a house to create an impression of warmth, though this color is often — and wrongly — employed for that purpose. A hall of white marble, if filled with growing plants and trickling fountains, not only suggests warmth, but convinces you of it. On entering a room where flowers flourish and water flows, you recognize instinctively the existence of heat. You realize that unless it were warm the flowers would droop, the water freeze. A room with white-panelled walls, green carpets and hangings, may be made more suggestive of warmth by the introduction of growing plants than by all the red hangings in the world. Notes of red among the greens make the composition better, add a certain tonic, as it were, like bitters to a beverage, or pepper to a sauce.

I stayed, not long since, in a country house. One of its parlors was covered with a paper showing branches of green willow-leaves on a white ground. The wood-work was white, the sofas green. There were bare floors and rugs. The southern windows were filled with plants, one a flowering geranium. I saw this room afterward on one of the coldest winter days, when winds were howling and snow drifting. A fire burned on the hearth. There were wood-fires in all the other rooms, and south-

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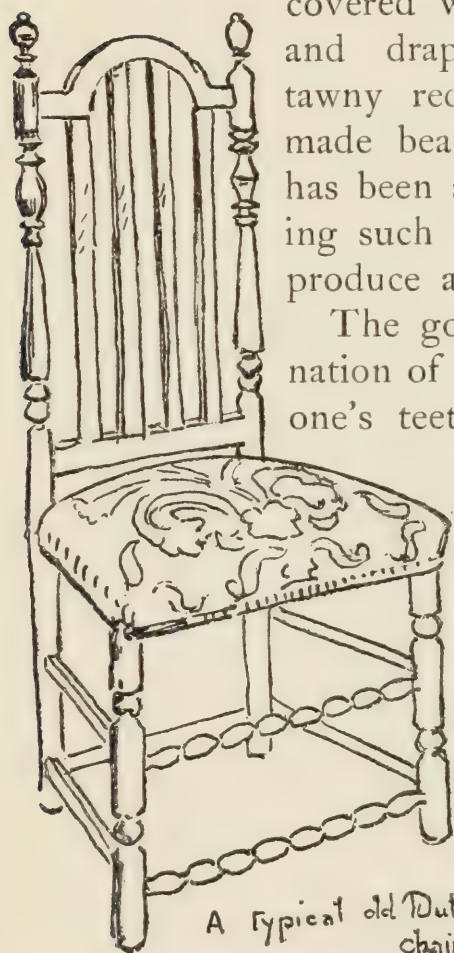
ern windows in some, but none had the sense of snugness and warmth felt in that green and white parlor with its geraniums in bloom.

As a decoration red is most interesting, but it must be used with discretion. A room with walls covered with Turkish red, embroideries, and draperies, — crimson, rose, brick, tawny reds, and soft pinks, — may be made beautiful, but only when an adept has been at work. The amateur attempting such a room would in all probability produce a series of discords.

The good pinks are made by a combination of red and white. Some pinks set one's teeth on edge, — those having in them a mixture of blue. Others that run into soft tea-rose tones and made by a little yellow mixed in with red and white are full of a refreshing quality.

With pink walls white wood-work seems imperative, as it does equally with blue. White or very light furniture is suitable, although mahogany never fails to adapt itself to pink walls. Mahogany always seems like a well-bred guest:

introduce a bit of it into almost any home and it will adapt itself at once to its environment. I saw it in a pink and white morning-room the other



A typical old Dutch
chair.
Seventeenth Century.

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day, among satin couches, and I felt it added a note of distinction, as the well-bred, of affable manners, always do. In the simplest of rooms it would have been quite as much at home. This particular morning-room had a wainscoting of white wood running from the floor to a four-inch border of white rose-wreathed paper enclosing a paper imitating pink watered silk. The windows were hung with satin similar to that covering the couches. It was a room strictly adapted to the needs of its beautiful owner, who used it only for the writing of letters and the reading of light literature after breakfast. Serious pursuits would have been impossible in it. Pink is never the color of a student's mood, although it may be that of a cheerful philosopher's.

Although mahogany will make itself at home in different environments, it is never so happy as when associated with golden browns, with the browns that have been made sunny with yellow and red.

When a room is to be hung with many pictures, or filled with pottery or porcelain, this sunny brown makes a charming setting. The chairs and sofas that are covered with it subordinate themselves, keeping the lower part of the room, as it should be kept, in a subdued key, leaving the eye free to travel where it will over the pictures or the pottery above.

By combining golden browns and dull yellows with notes of red, you can make your interior not only sunny and cheerful, but hospitable, since you can introduce almost anything into it. You may get the greens of mosses or ferns among the red

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browns of oak-leaves covering the ground in a woodland — exhilarating effects which, as you see them, make you wonder what has happened to inspire you with so cheerful a mood.

Russet tones are delightful in living-rooms, whether in country or town. They can be introduced into a room having oak or walnut wood-work, by using golden brown on the walls and in the furniture, having a lower key in the carpet, and somewhere among the golden greens of the cushions a flaming note of red. Whenever the yellow oak of commerce must be retained in the trim and wainscoting, russet tones are to be recommended.

The grays and greens of nature are symphonies, especially the purple grays and greens of French forests. Grays and greens in houses seldom produce an agreeable impression, unless some artist understanding color has been at work. The gray wood now so fashionable when used as a high wainscoting in a dining-room blends happily with the green of ferns or the silvery green of fine velvets. The soft greenish or silvery grays of a burlaps that has been treated by an artist is delightful as a background for tapestries, pictures, and carvings.

Of all colors used in our houses green makes the most satisfactory and reposeful background, — not light pea-green, nor blue-green, nor yet a certain flashy, shiny, uncomfortable green; none of the greens that are seen in some shop-window and, alas! in many houses. The greens to which I refer as being reposeful are the dark olives, which do not

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change under lamplight, and which make a wall an inconspicuous setting for pictures, books, and flowers. With this green can be combined pinkish tones, yellow, or red. Blue is also good with it, when introduced as blue plates on dining-room walls.

If you like yellow, you can introduce it into a green room, in brass, in the braid of a curtain, or as the gold mats of your pictures. The green of the mullein stalk, or an apple-green, will carry a room up to a higher key and give an effect suitable for bedrooms and dining-rooms.

Recently it has been the fashion to combine red with green. It has become an every-day occurrence to see green walls with red hangings, or red walls with green draperies and carpets. The reds of hangings, either on the walls or at the openings, are seldom of a solid unbroken color. Thus with red velvets there is almost always the braid, eight or ten inches wide, and shot with a gold thread or a yellow silk. When brocades or damasks are used, their raised figures break the light as it falls, and carry the eye away from the tedium of an unrelieved solidity.

One country house, used in winter, has been treated with reds and greens in this way. All the floors are covered with a rich red velvet carpet — a sweep of splendid color lying across the drawing-room floor, the much-divided hall, up the stairs to the bedrooms above, down the flight of a dozen steps or more to the library door, and on across that floor to the fireplace at its end, some forty

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feet away. The walls of the drawing-room are covered with a large red figure on a white ground. The hall is green, — a better background for the pictures; the library, red. No sense of confusion is conveyed by the breaking up of the wall-colors. That splendid sweep of red in the carpet, when the doors are thrown open, brings everything together. An unbroken stretch of wall-space could never have done this.

When dependence must be placed upon color to make a room interesting, costly materials and furniture are not a necessity, although it is well to remember that certain reds, fine yellows, and grays are found only in expensive textiles.

Repose in a room comes from a certain evenness of tone. A room, however simple, can in its color and proportion suggest charm and repose. The dyes of most denims are excellent, and a room hung, curtained, and upholstered in a denim of good tone can be invested with dignity. Take a certain room in which I am a frequent visitor. The wood-work and ceiling are white, the walls covered with a dark-red paper, the floor is bare except for a single rug. The divan cushions are covered with red denim; the curtains, having a valance across the top, are of the same material. Plants fill the windows. The walls are lined with photographs, — Van Dycks and Rembrandts, in dark frames without mats. The white mantel is decorated with an old-fashioned mirror in a gilt frame, a pair of crystal candlesticks, and a vase of flowers. There

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are books on the white shelves, and on the well-appointed writing-table. Here is a room which is simplicity itself, and costs but a few dollars to furnish; yet every visitor who crosses the threshold recognizes at once that its inmate is a lady, intellectual and refined; that while economy has of necessity been practised, its mistress has utilized limited means at her command with discretion and intelligence. Indeed, as I discovered one day, she has a series of pasteboard boxes high up on a closet shelf, filled with superfluous things, — presents and legacies that would have been out of key with the simplicity of her present condition, or with colors and tones that would have made her room a discord. Compare such a room with one hung with a paper showing gilt figures, maroon curtains at the windows, chairs tied with blue bows, and lamps with globes decorated with pink roses. One room is reposeful and dignified, in spite of the inexpensiveness of the materials in it; the other would be discordant, obtrusive, unrestful, however costly the stuffs employed.

Indeed, a question of cost does not enter into the subject at all, except as money is a means of purchase. The most exquisite old Colonial house I ever saw was spoiled by colors at variance with its traditions and its builder's taste: they seemed foreign in that beautiful old house; intruders, having no business to lodge there even for a night — out of harmony with the walls, the lovely windows, the simple fireplace. Yet the woman who

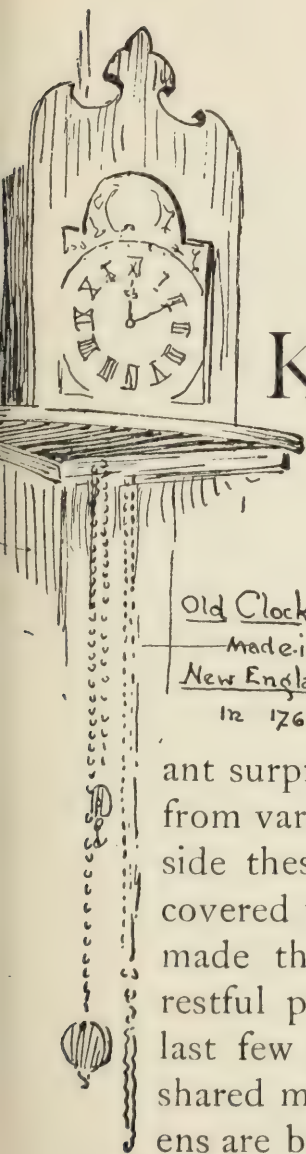
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chose those colors could have bought anything she wanted ; she was always buying, always busy over selections ; but she knew nothing of relative values, of what constituted the appropriate, or belonged to the period of which her home was, architecturally, so beautiful an example. Failing this knowledge, she failed in every purchase, and the result was a hopeless discord. This gives me, just here, the opportunity to say, that the owner of a beautiful house has that which is a contribution to her time, an education to her contemporaries. For this reason it should be obligatory to make the house a perfect presentment of the period it represents, either the present or the past. One is untrue to ideals who inherits a noble example of old architecture, and allows the whims of an uncultivated taste to destroy its dignity and repose. It is only when we keep in view this point about houses, books, or pictures, when we regard them as we ought, that we need feel no sense of self-reproach in criticizing the dwelling-places of our neighbors.

When its occupant makes no pretence in a house, being too poor to do more than make a habitation comfortable and hospitable, the case is altered. Then criticism would be criticism of another's limitations, another's poverties, and nothing is worse than that. But a faultless piece of architecture spoiled by the bad taste of a legatee, who does not know one good thing from another, and who is too vain and too indifferent to seek advice, becomes a fit subject for criticism.

CHAPTER IV

KITCHENS

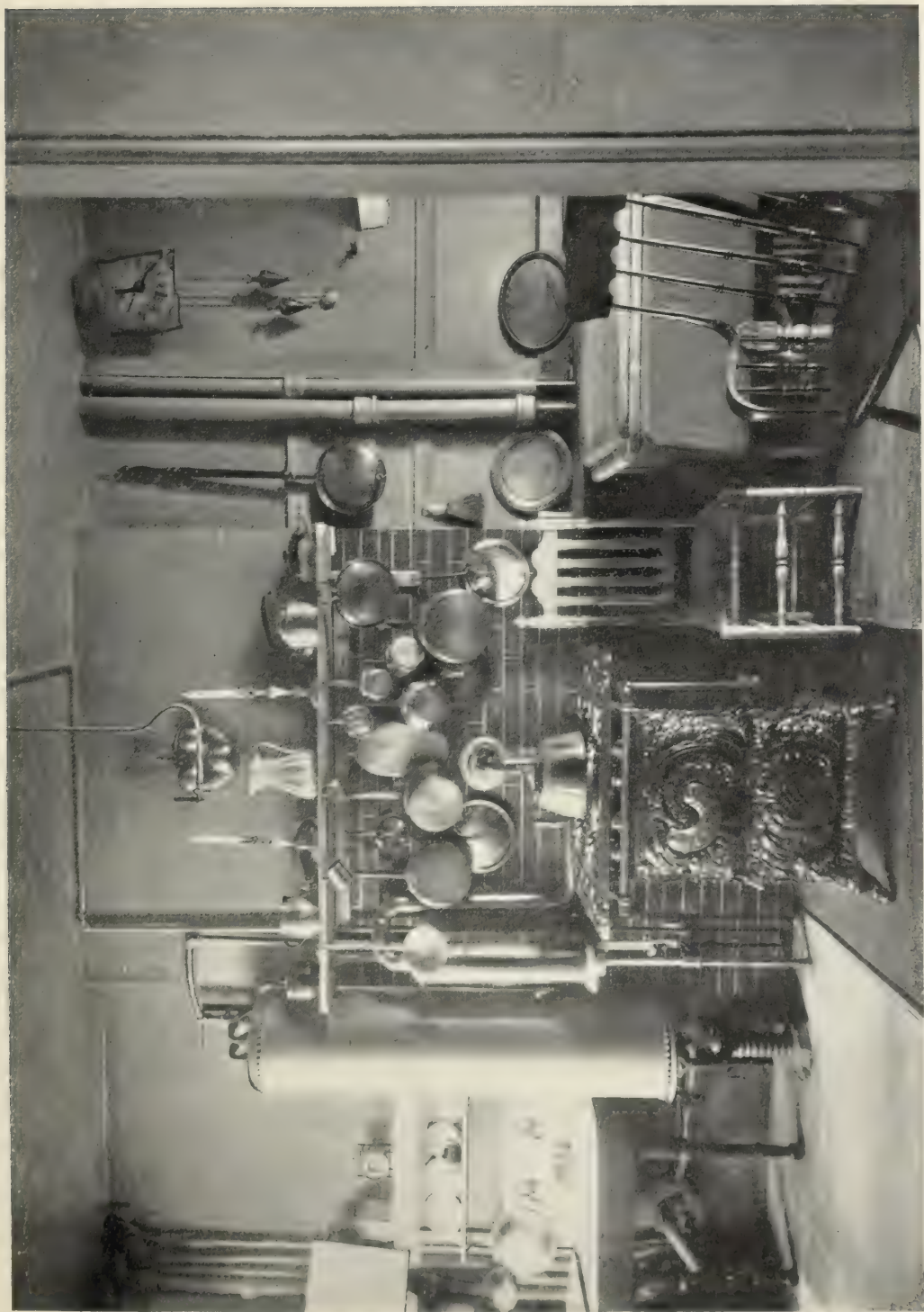


KITCHENS have always had a fascination for me, possibly because I remember how delightful were some of those that I knew in my youth, — long, wide rooms, with white scrubbed floors, old Dutch ovens, and spotless motherly cooks (they all seemed motherly in those days) presiding over a storehouse of pleasant surprises, and with wonderful aromas arising from various cupboards or cellar shelves. Outside these kitchens there was always an arbor covered with grape-vines, which on warm days made the stone flagging beneath a cool and restful playground for children. But until the last few years I have never met any one who shared my enthusiasm. To most women kitchens are bores — subterranean regions suggestive of necessary daily inspections with rapid retreats; regions associated with over-heated atmospheres of divers kinds, sundry threats, much disorder, and endless vexing, unsolved problems of ways and means, right and wrong, leniency and ingratitude,

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and the host of other direful things which make housekeeping so exhausting to most Americans.

It is only since I have begun to know something of apartments, and how men and women who have studied abroad have learned to live in studios, that I have discovered people as interested as I am in the subject of kitchens, — in making them into pretty and livable places; places to be proud of, not to shun. The charm of some of the old-world kitchens was not to be resisted by those who had felt it. It was inevitable that they should be imitated by returning travellers. Moreover, life in an apartment or a studio necessitates a different order of domestic arrangement from that which rules in a house. Everything is within arm's reach, as it were, nothing can be hidden; and kitchens, in most instances, are separated only by a door from the hall through which guests come and go; and these guests, many of whom have always lived in houses, are apt to regard an apartment as they would some pleasure-craft or mountain camp. To them it lacks the seriousness of a house. They look at it as they might a toy. They realize that life is simplified, much care eliminated, and that a unique system of ways and means must prevail. About this system they immediately begin to inquire, as they would never dream of inquiring in a house with an up and down stairs to it, where a kitchen was off somewhere in the basement. Does not every young married woman, beginning life in an apartment, have the same story to tell? And when she leads now



“HUNG WITH COPPER COOKING UTENSILS”



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one, now another, of her sympathetic intimates through her new home, must she not always open the door of her kitchen wide enough to admit at least their interested faces? And shall I not confess to feeling aggrieved myself, when a view of one of these comfortable little places is denied me?

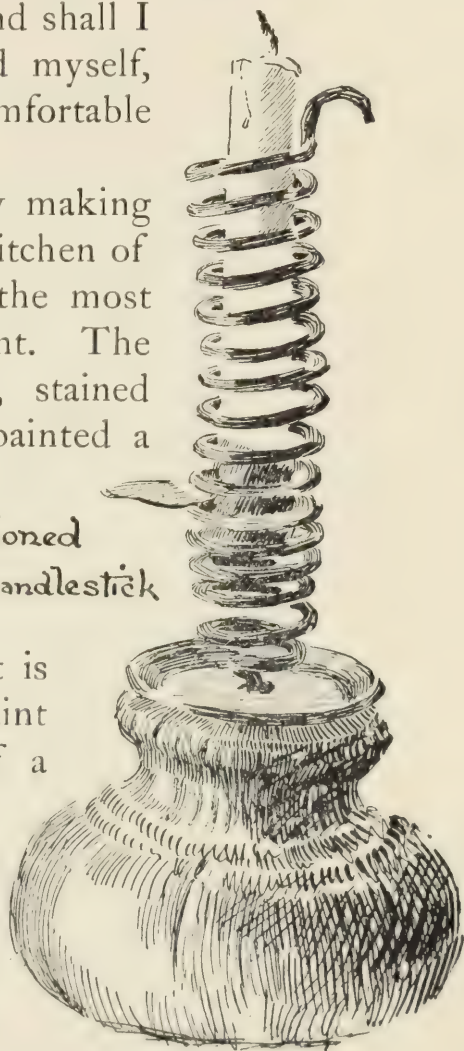
I realize that I am constantly making excuses to get a peep into the kitchen of a woman I know. It is one of the most delightful rooms of her apartment. The wood-work is, as she found it, stained to imitate oak; the walls are painted a cheerful, light, and re-

freshing green; the chimney-piece back of the gas-stove has the appear-

ance of being bricked, though it is only covered with red enamel paint lined with white, the work of a painter under her direction, — easily done, yet costing little.

The shelf above the red is hung with copper cooking utensils, highly polished and glowing with color. An old-

fashioned Dutch clock hangs over the tubs, its quaint weights suspended by chains. The rocking-chair is cushioned in gay calico. Over the top of the window appears the only other textile used in the room, — a valance of white linen edged with



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crocheted lace. I have never seen this kitchen when it was not in spotless order, its well-scrubbed floor clean and inviting as the table by the window; nor have I ever seen the smiling maid-servant when she was not ready to exhibit it with pride.

Just above this kitchen, in the same apartment house, is another, its duplicate, which has been treated in a different way. The wood-work is like that on the lower floor,—an imitation oak. The walls are painted a light chrome yellow. The chimney-piece back of the gas stove looks as though filled with white tiles. White enamelled paint, divided by blue lines into four-inch squares, creates this impression. The cooking utensils, being less interesting than those of the neighbor beneath, are hidden in a closet. The two shelves over the chimney-piece are decorated with some of the blue Canton china in daily use,—coffee-pot, cups and saucers, vegetable dishes, and platters. The stencilled frieze above the shelf repeats in blue the simple pattern seen in the border of the Canton ware. The white of the tiles on the face of the chimney matches the bluish-white of the cups. Blue cotton, stamped with white, forms the valance over the top of the window, and the same material is used for the tablecloth. It adds much to the attractiveness of the room, and being washable, can easily be kept immaculate.

By comparing the two illustrations it will be seen that though these two rooms are alike in size and exposure, an application of different colors, and a

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display of different utensils, have made them assume different characters. It will also be seen — and special emphasis should be laid on this point — that nothing is permitted to appear which is not of actual use. The question of utility has governed every arrangement. The useful has been made the ornamental.

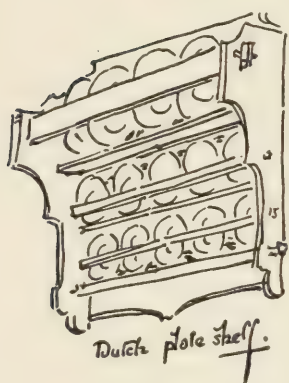
The moment that the purely ornamental is introduced into kitchens, that moment the possibility of artistic excellence is destroyed. Neither vases nor cheap prints nor chromos should appear. When books are permitted, as they are in another apartment kitchen (shown in the illustration), you are made to feel instantly that the books are there to be read ; that the maids, having no separate sitting-room, have been made as comfortable as possible by their mistress. And the books and the reading-lamp are in a specially reserved place by themselves, not cumbering the tables while the cooking is going on. The walls, wood-work, and curtains of this kitchen are white ; the floor is covered by a white linoleum squared with blue ; there is a folding-table near by, to be drawn out at night ; the cooking utensils are copper, and across the windows are shelves for growing plants.

I know some other pretty kitchens, too, one in particular, out of which many and many a delightful dinner has been served to choice companies gathered in the adjoining studio. It is only about nine by sixteen feet, this little kitchen of enviable repute. A gas stove occupies one corner next a

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sink having hot and cold water. When no cooking is going on the stove is concealed by a tall Japanese screen, and, because life in studio-buildings sometimes necessitates a makeshift or two, a pine settle is drawn up in front of this screen, a most comfortable settle, by the way, and accommodating — since it will seat two persons at any time, or answer as a table for dishes if the owner should so prefer.

A heated poker, cleverly applied, has adorned it with a border of pretty design, and a coat of crude oil has given it the appearance of old oak. A set of shelves, made after an old Dutch model and treated in similar fashion, hangs between the doors, supporting quaint Dutch platters and jugs, bits of copper, and pitchers collected across the sea. Over the refrigerator, treated also to look like dark oak,



hang other shelves filled with colored plates and dishes. There are no stuffs about, of course, no hangings, nothing in reality that does not belong to a kitchen. Neither is a single convenience sacrificed to artistic effects: I have only to remember the dinners to realize this; but any visitor to the studio might be asked to step into this little room and wait there, without having the least suspicion of his whereabouts, so delightfully is the whole spirit of an artist's interior suggested.

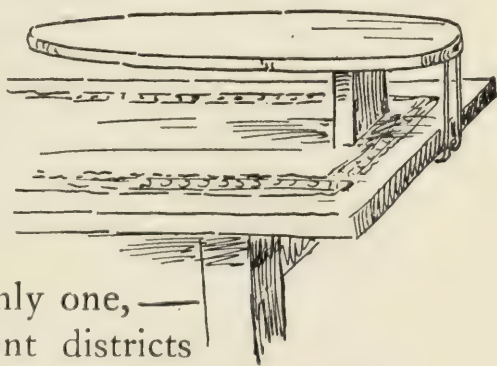
Another kitchen has been treated with blue paint — wood-work and walls and shelves; brass kettles, candlesticks, lamps, and flowered china putting the

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finish to its scheme of decoration. Then there is another, the walls of which have been covered with the blue and white oil-cloth used for kitchen tables, and which can be as readily washed as paint. Blue and white linoleum covers the floor. There are few things more delightful than a pine floor kept spotless by the daily application of the scrubbing-brush, though of course the question of the labor it involves must be taken into consideration. Such a floor should never be allowed to show a stain, otherwise it becomes worse than a spotted apron on a cook.

As I recall these kitchens, of how pretty and interesting and convenient they are, I wonder why it is that so little is done by other people to make similar places attractive. *Tiny ironing board, to hook on a table.*

The lower one descends in the scale of social importance, the smaller the means, the more the kitchen is in evidence. There are many persons who cannot afford servants, or who can have only one, —



and all through the tenement districts there are people who must eat as well as cook in the same room, yet no attempt is made by these persons to grace them either with a touch of dignity or of importance. It seems to me sometimes, that the whole status of living might be raised were more attention paid to the subject, more interest felt in it. And the change could be so easily effected. First,

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admit only the things that could be scrubbed or shaken ; then a little attention paid to the stove and the mantel, a little more building up about these ; care displayed in the arrangement of dishes and cooking utensils, so that they become part of the decoration of the room, as they are in the old-world kitchens of the peasants — many of whom are in our midst. Were a tasteful grouping of dishes and cooking utensils effected about the stove and chimney-piece, a certain compelling note would be achieved at once, forcing the woman who worked beside it to keep from that part of the room all foreign and discordant elements, — bottles, papers, calendars that had become dusty months before — a host of other untidy articles would be found to have no place there, and from the feeling that they were out of place, would grow the need of providing special receptacles for them, or, better still, of doing away with them altogether.

The question of decoration, too, has been made easy in these days. The manufacturer has gone on improving his wares till there are not only pretty tins for teas and coffees and spices, but pretty chinaware as well, either in pure white or blue and white ; refrigerators are tiled, and kettles lined with porcelain ; wood-boxes are both useful and ornamental ; and the shapes of many of the commoner dishes are better even than those of the silver specially designed for the table — they make you want to go to work at once.

Many women do go to work at once — the

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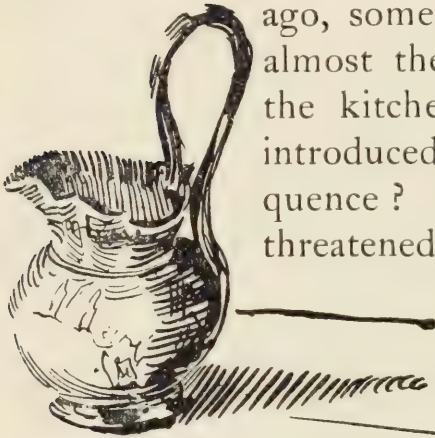
women who do not belong to tenements. The fad for cooking-schools has developed latent talent among modern housekeepers, so that a lady experimenting with some new recipe is no longer the unusual spectacle she was during that interval when suddenly acquired wealth carried us away from the traditions of our grandmother's generation. Thirty or forty years ago domestic arts had grown to be regarded only as a form of menial service. To-day we are returning to better views. In the hands of the wholesome college-trained women of the present day domestic management bids fair to become almost as exact a science as the system of hygiene which controls the running of our institutions.

The farmhouse kitchen, and that of the more prosperous country-dweller, is almost always sure to be cheerful. Its environment, the presence of trees and vines, insures this. It is the kitchen of the house in town that is apt to be dreary, the kitchen sometimes half a story below the basement, the kitchen with old wood-work, and old tubs and smoked ceilings — the kitchen of houses, often enough, of luxury and comfort upstairs, but with no touch of improvement below. Sometimes, when such a touch is suggested by a sympathetic friend, the family is almost demoralized. And the arguments against it are most curious; remarks about hovels on the other side of the water, and the new-fangled notions of the day on this, and the race of good, contented, hard-working servants dying out — nowhere, in any of the talk, the slightest remem-

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brance of the fact that orders and conditions change everywhere, and that if they did not the world would be left in a stagnant condition.

I remember something my dear old mother told me of certain upheavals in her own kitchen long ago, somewhere in the forties. Hers was almost the first house in Washington into the kitchen of which running water was introduced. And what was the consequence? All her colored maid-servants threatened to leave; they wanted the fun of gossiping daily at the town pump. She lived to see servants wanting to depart when water had to be carried from



Cantigalli pitcher.

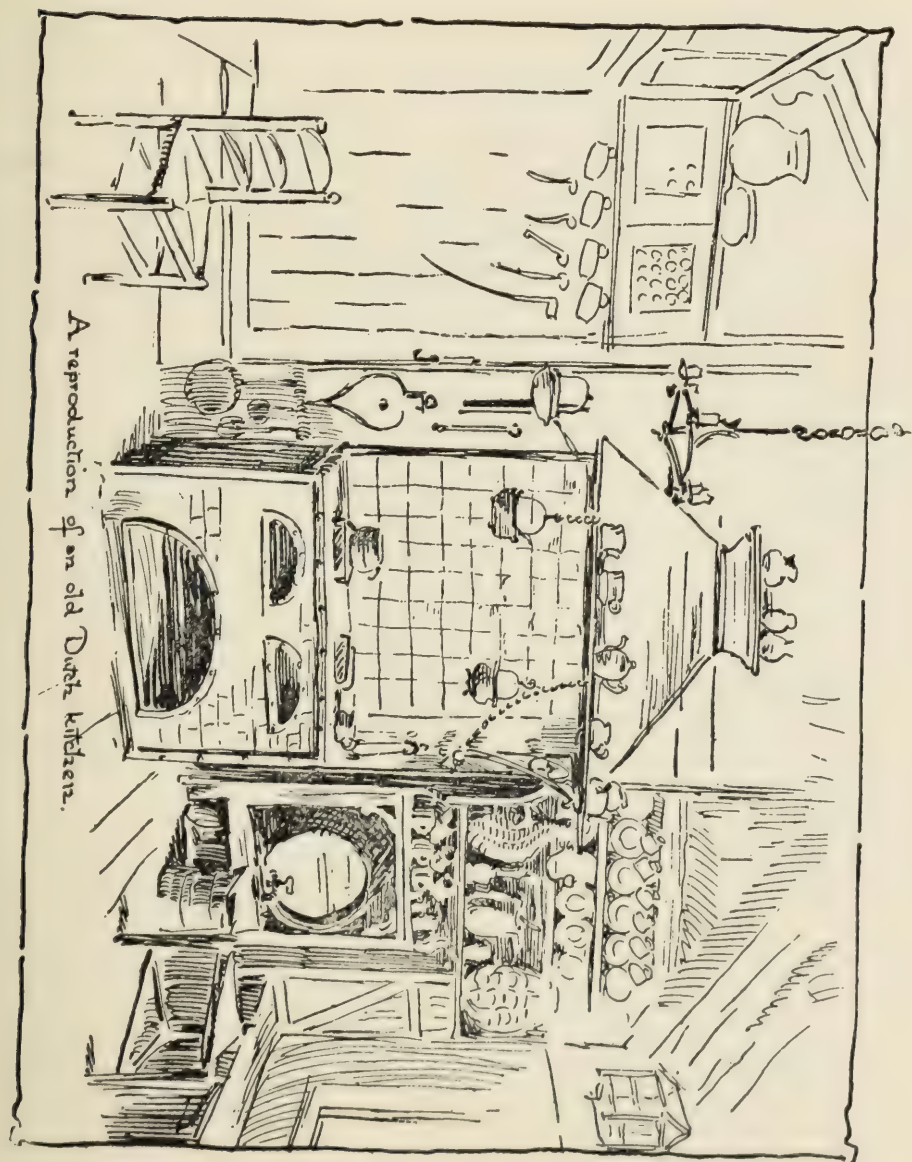
the faucets of the kitchen only as far as the wooden wash-tubs set up on benches four feet away. So it is that the pendulum of progress swings.

Gloomy kitchens below stairs can always be treated with fresh white paint, and white linoleum floors. Yellow could be introduced into the wood-work. There is nothing like paint for transforming kitchens and pantries. Of course dust will come, and another year the kitchen will be as shabby as before, but there is always more paint to be had. Of course, too, many women will feel the annual renovations of their kitchens a burden, — women to whom new papers upstairs would seem objects worthy of sacrifice.



"Cantigalli" (crowing)
mark on this polt

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A reproduction of an old Dutch kitchen.

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But one-sided views as to the obligations of human relations are apt to prevail, especially in domestic affairs; and there are no views, it seems to me, so absolutely and hopelessly one-sided as those which refuse to recognize the servants' quarters as part of a mistress's domain; as standing for her as much as her drawing-rooms do, whether her servants appreciate her efforts or abuse her privileges. Neither the appreciation nor the abuse has anything to do with the question of her obligation. If a house is to stand for the man or woman at the head of it, every part of that house is to be made representative. This rule holds good in all art. To have the façade of a house beautiful and the rear tawdry and cheap, or, if I may be pardoned the repetition of a time-worn joke, to have "a cottage with a Queen Anne front and a Mary Ann back," is the most reprehensible form of architectural expression; to have a pretty and cheerful drawing-room, and an ill-appointed, dreary kitchen, is to disobey a similar code. Another way in which the codes are violated is the use made at times of the front basement room as a dining-room. Now and then this use is obligatory, as when a back parlor, for instance, has to be used as a doctor's office. When this is the case, nothing can be said; I refer rather to instances where people do not stop to think, and who fancy that they are saving themselves and the servants trouble by dining in the front basement. In reality they are depriving their maids of a place for recreation; and, curiously enough, the pleasure-lovers of life are not

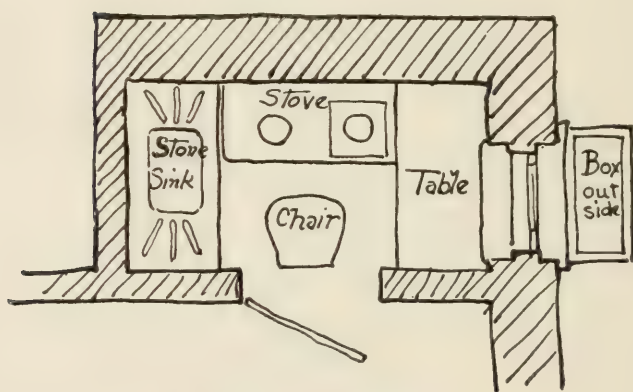
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those who err oftenest in this direction, but the people with no well-defined social relations of their own, or who consider questions of economy only. People of fashion never descend to the basement for a meal, and in New York it has become part of a recognized code to make the front basement into a sitting-room for the servants, arranging it with as much taste as possible. In smaller towns away from the fashionable centres, one finds, unhappily, another rule prevailing.

If, as I said before, the lower one descends in the scale of social importance or of wealth the more the kitchen is in evidence, so the higher one ascends in the scale of magnificence the less it is apparent, and the more perfectly it is appointed. The kitchens of the newer modern houses are filled with conveniences of which our grandmothers never dreamed. The walls are covered with white glazed tiles, finished at the ceiling with a conventional border, sometimes green, sometimes blue, also of the tiling. The floor is of cement or unglazed tiles. Hygienic principles are nowhere neglected. No corners are left for dust, no cracks are there where insects or microbes can lodge. About the edge of the room, where the floor joins the wall, and where ordinarily a sharp angle is made, the tiling is curved so that a wet cloth wipes everything away. The refrigerators are tiled; so are the cold-rooms, meat-closets, and pantries; shelves are of thick bevelled glass; in the wine-cellar, when wire is not used, terra-cotta receptacles are made for the bottles. The

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hose may be used in all parts of these kitchens without injury. No wash-tub, of course, appears — the laundry is often at the top of the house, or the clothes are taken away to be laundered. Thus everything is arranged for cleanliness, but no result is obtained in the way of good taste which is not possible to the owners of the simplest and most unpretentious of kitchens.

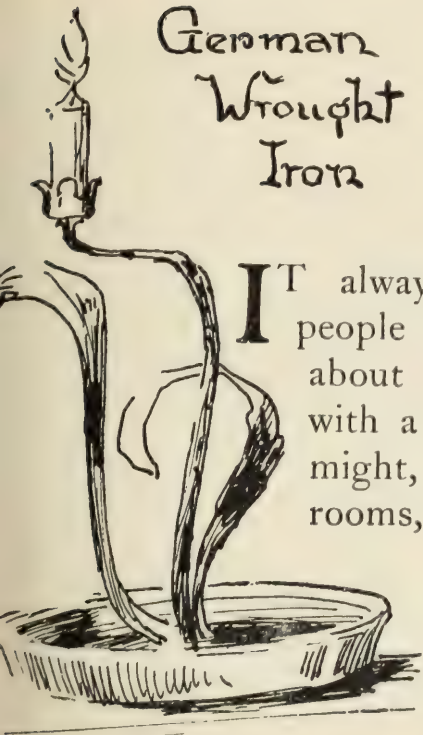


*Plan of a tiny kitchen in
a small apartment in
Paris*

German
Wrought
Iron

CHAPTER V

BEDROOMS : APARTMENTS



IT always astonishes me to discover people who can have their own way about things, contenting themselves with a bedroom and bath, when they might, if they chose, have dressing-rooms, boudoirs, or morning-rooms as well. Women living in the country with acres on which to build, and money with which to do the building, will often prefer one large bedroom in which they can sleep, dress, read and write, sew in the morning and lounge in the afternoon, to a series of smaller rooms in which these occupations may be carried on separately. It seems to me even the sentiments that cling about the mother's room might be preserved, if the young sons and daughters found her busy with her needle in a pretty boudoir rather than in the room in which she must perform the offices of the toilet as well.

We all know some of these bedrooms, filled with beds, bureaus, baby-cribs, and dressing-tables, rocking-chairs and lounges, bookcases, and the family photographs and souvenirs. And we know, too,

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how spotless and neat and sunny they may be, how full of cheer and pleasant memories. But whenever I see one of them my sympathy always goes out to the husband, so small a portion of it seems left for him.

Sometimes, when I think how men are shoved about in their own houses, I do not wonder at the popularity of clubs. Now and then some bold father will venture a room for himself, and with that art undeniably his, of making his own particular quarters comfortable, he will provide himself with a delightful study or library. At once it becomes the most popular room in the house: the young daughter begs it for tea in the afternoon; the children bring their books to his sofa in the morning; his wife's work-bag lies on his table, her family letters among his legal documents, and whenever she wants a quiet chat with some of her intimates she takes her visitors into his den, where the atmosphere is always one of comfort and repose.

I knew a man of letters once. He lived in town in a three-story brick house, with his wife and child. He earned his living by his pen, but he had to do it in this way. After breakfast he was permitted the dining-room to write in; when the maid appeared to set the table for luncheon he gathered together his papers and went upstairs to the guest-room; if that was occupied — and it generally was — he took refuge in a corner of his wife's bedroom. When she was busy there, he wrote where he could.

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Of course if you have not money to do as you choose the case is altogether different. If you must live in the conventional high-stoop house, or in an apartment where you are always cramped for space, no question of night and morning rooms can be raised. As to the small flats and apartments that are going up on every side, I never escape a pang of sympathy and regret as I think of their tenants. Family life in its better sense cannot exist in them, and its semblance is only to be secured at the price of eternal compromise. They may mean protection from the weather, a shelter in which to eat and sleep, but personal liberty, and the possibility of privacy in them, does not exist. There is moral danger, as well as discomfort, in cramped quarters, although the capitalist with money to invest in paying properties gives the question scant consideration.

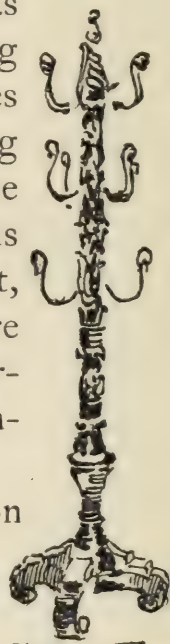
The bedrooms of flats and apartments must be treated in a different way from those of even small houses. The luxury of dressing-rooms, for instance, will be quite unknown unless the apartment is of the most expensive sort. When a dressing-room does appear, the feat has been accomplished, you may be sure, only by the sacrifice of an extra bedroom. Ordinarily everything must be crowded into one room, or, worse still, crowded out.

An apartment bedroom, when it does not open on a shaft, and when it is large enough to sit in at all, and when a living-room and parlor are not possible, must be used for much else besides sleeping. You must dress in it, and when you do not have

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exclusive use of the bathroom, you must keep a washstand with its pitcher and basin in view of visitors, and not infrequently you must keep your sewing machine not many feet away from your bed. When you find yourself compelled to do this, it is better to hire your machine by the month, as you hire your gas stoves by the year, confining your sewing to stated intervals: in large cities this is possible, the rent of a machine being low. Every effort should be made to keep the sentiment of a bedroom intact. Proper as this is in all places, it becomes imperative in a flat, where every room is on one floor, and where almost unconsciously one permits the properties of one room to encroach upon those of another to the detriment of them all.

It is not possible to insist too strongly on this point, since the whole question of flat-dwelling implies, unhappily, the sacrifice of many a cherished household tradition, and an entering into new conditions forced upon the modern man and woman by the exigencies of the times. The never-ending struggle of the flat-dweller, then, should be above all to respect and preserve certain long-established laws of living, and in doing this, at the same time to yield with all possible grace to the limitations and exactions of the new economic order. The bedroom of a flat should be reserved as a bedroom, the parlor as a parlor, no matter at what cost of labor and inconvenience. Otherwise life in an apartment becomes



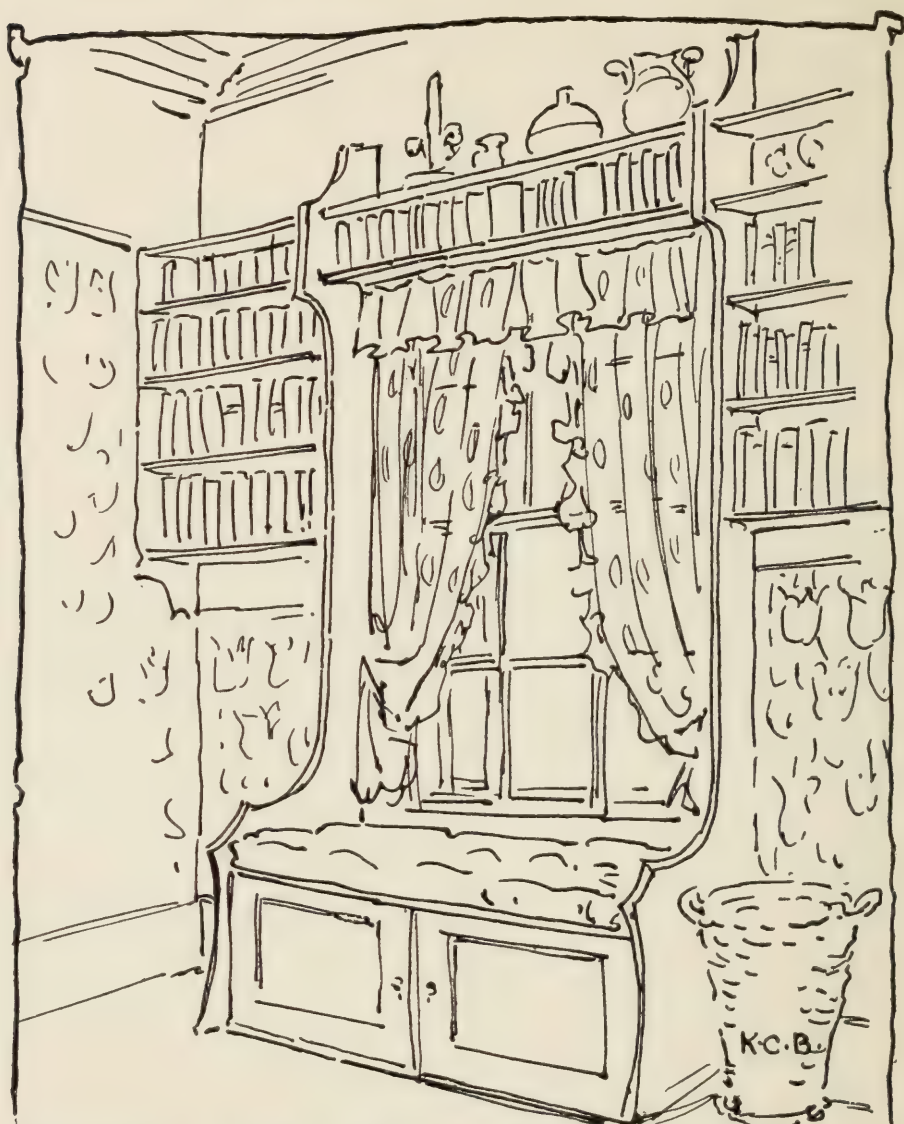
Clothes Tree
1820
Carved Mahoe

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

a hodge-podge, and the graces and amenities of existence are sacrificed.

The smaller the bedroom the greater the need for a bare floor and rugs. It is impossible to keep the room clean in any other way. An apartment, it must be remembered, is not like a house, which has as many halls as there are stories. There is no place for the bedroom furniture when you clean, unless you fill your one thoroughfare with it. You cannot sweep your carpet without moving your furniture, but you may have a rug shaken and a floor washed without any great upheaval. Mattings tear easily, and should not be used in a room where a bed to be made must be drawn out from the wall. The bare floor is not injured by the moving of furniture. Its scratches can be concealed by a rug, and it can be kept shining after it has been washed by being rubbed with a coarse flannel dampened with a mere suggestion of oil.

In the treatment of the walls, the size of the room and the amount of light admitted must be taken into consideration; also the position of the bed, its standing against the wall or with the head only against it; and last, but by no means least, is the owner's predilections for particular colors. These predilections should always be respected, although a woman with a weakness for red is advised to indulge her liking sparingly in a bedroom. Red flowers on a white ground may be introduced, but the red should be scattered and broken, and relieved by white. She may use it again in her draperies if



Combination window seat and bookshelves built in a hall bedroom seven feet wide. The long brackets at the sides are set on the outside edge of the window trim, making the seat four feet long. The curve for these was carefully studied on the spot by cutting the "full size detail" out of heavy brown paper and fitting it to the wall. The shelves are from five to seven inches wide, and about eighteen long.

Under the seat is a shoe cabinet. The lower shelf is two inches from the floor, the upper one twelve. The doors are panelled. The woodwork is ivory white. The wall paper, soft greens, an English design of very large lilies on a white ground. Furniture, old mahogany.

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she does so with discretion, and now and then a strong note of red in a chair or a bedspread may be permitted, but ordinarily red lacks the freshness and coolness which a bedroom should suggest.

There are an endless number of pretty and cheap papers to be found; those showing large flowers, however, are not to be thought of for small rooms. Paint, in many instances, is better than any paper, and if you know enough about mixing colors to direct the ordinary painter, or if you are sure of your workman's appreciation of tones, painted walls, which can be wiped down at intervals, are strongly urged; for, unlike a house, an apartment is apt to have had a succession of tenants before you moved in, to say nothing of others now separated from you by a flight of stairs only. The possibility, therefore, of having your bedrooms perennially freshened should be preserved at all hazards.

A small bedroom, especially when it opens on a shaft, may be made dainty and attractive by white wood-work and walls, an enamelled bed and white furniture, white curtains at the windows, and white trimmings for the bed. If a color is desired it may be added in several ways. A colored rug may be introduced, — one of plain green or red filling; or the white curtains and bedspread may be trimmed with a border of chintz, the mirror framed with it; or the curtains may be tied back with a color, and the small pillow have ribbons to match. Ribbons, however, are absolutely interdicted in a bed-

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room unless the owner is able to replenish them whenever they are mussed or soiled. "Faded finery," I once heard an old lady say, "is a sin." Sometimes I am inclined to believe the dear old lady was right.

Another effect may be produced when the walls are white, — and white walls in a bedroom, by the way, come into life, now and then, with an irresistible quality of refreshment — by chintz hangings, bed-trimmings, and slip-covers for the chairs and cushions. Anatolian cottons are always satisfactory. Armures, scrims, cotton damasks, and taffetas lend themselves for different effects. Charming results may be accomplished with some seven-cent flowered muslins trimmed with white cotton ball-fringe, or with ruffles of the same. Ordinary denim, costing sixteen cents a yard, is not to be despised, neither is cheese-cloth nor silkoline. In fact, there is an endless variety from which a choice may be made. No wool drapery should at any time be permitted. Embroidered hangings, damasks, satins, and brocades, while permissible in the bedrooms of palatial dwellings, are altogether inappropriate in small apartments, and mark the owner as a person of questionable taste.

Should a color be preferred on the painted walls, the white wood-work still being preserved, a delicate rose-tone might be used, with chintz hangings and bedspread showing pink roses on a pink ground; or white hangings could still be used with the rose-toned walls, the hangings being trimmed with a

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chintz border. If white be made to predominate, a bedroom hung with blue and white suggests a freshness and daintiness that are delightful.

A warm yellow might be substituted for the rose-tones by those who love yellow better. The bed could then be covered with white, the hangings at the window be of a soft yellow trimmed with full ruffles of white lace. Charming tones for the walls are made by mixing orange chrome and yellow, and again by mixing chrome yellow with chrome green.

When the landlord is obdurate, and the hideous oak wood-work of the small apartment must be retained, yellows toning with the oak are suggested. Red with oak is to be avoided with all the energy with which you would resist an evil influence. A dark rich oak with the faded red of a rich Genoese velvet, like that we see in old Italian and Spanish chairs and in libraries, is an altogether different matter. In these sumptuous old pieces of furniture the combination is beautiful; but the inferior light oak of modern dwellings, and the hideous reds turned out by the manufacturers of cheap textiles and wall-papers, produce effects as unlike the others as a common painted sign is unlike the portrait of a master. If green is chosen to go with this same light oak of commerce, it must be chosen carefully.

Burlaps makes an excellent wall covering for a small bedroom, especially if a wall is likely to be rubbed when the bed is made. Burlaps can always be wiped down with a cloth dampened with ammonia and water; cleanliness, therefore, is easily pre-

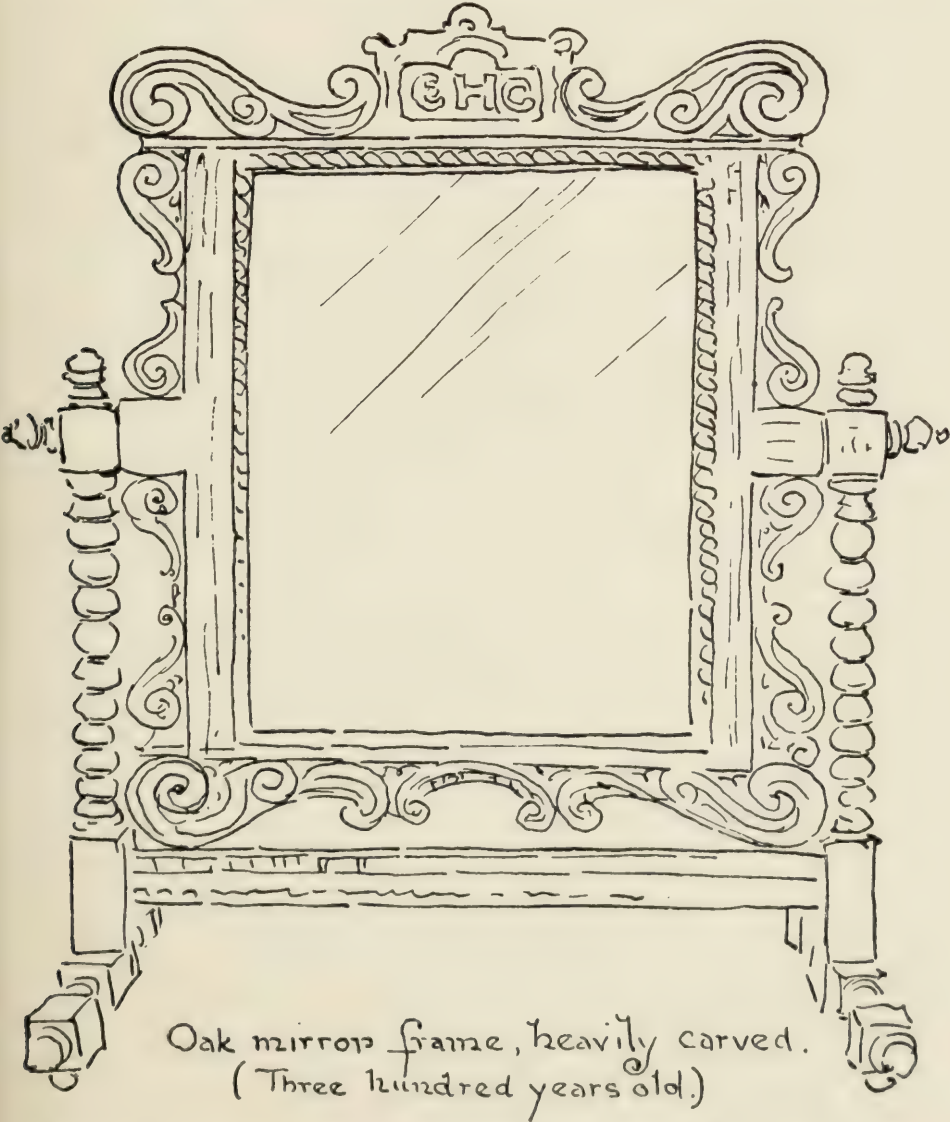
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served. Nails, too, can be driven in and pulled out without leaving a mark. One bedroom, found in a small apartment, has wood-work and ceilings of white, and walls covered with green burlaps. The candlesticks on the bureau are of green Dutch pottery. The bedspread and valance are of a green armure that costs thirty-five cents a yard. They are trimmed with a narrow gimp shot with green. Just below the pillow and in the middle of the spread the owner's monogram appears, worked on the armure with yellow gimp. This monogram might have been repeated in the upper right-hand corner of the curtain, and so help to increase the impression of a set design having been followed in the arrangement of the room. A white bed pushed back against the wall in so small a room would have presented too violent a contrast. Even so high a headpiece as that shown in the illustration is objectionable. A light paper, altering the conditions, would have necessitated an alteration in the treatment of the room. But a light paper was not possible unless the landlord had been willing to change it every year, for the cleanest of housemaids' dresses, rubbing against the space back of the bed when it was pulled out to be made, would soon have left marks that would have destroyed any impression of daintiness otherwise conveyed.

To be properly appointed, the beds should have bolsters, not pillows, under the cover. A difficult problem is touched upon here. In houses having ample closet room pillows can be concealed by day,

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and bolsters made of hair or pasteboard or papier-maché can be brought out. But closet room sufficient for the hiding of pillows all day is never



found except in apartments that rent for seven or eight thousand dollars a year, — apartments that to all intents and purposes are only houses grouped

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for convenience under one general roof. In ordinary apartments, then, the pillows must be left under the cover unless one has a papier-maché bolster made, to open and shut with hinges and springs, into which the pillows can be put every morning.

The "four-poster" has been hung with a flowered cretonne, low in tone, to harmonize with the walls, the mahogany furniture, and wood-work. This room overlooks a square, and is large enough to hold both a dressing and a night table, with its candle, at the head of the bed. The seat in front of the dressing-table, it will be noticed, has no back. Opposite this dressing-table the bureau and washstand are placed, while between them, with its head toward the windows and coming out from the wall, stands the lounge.

It is almost impossible, when discussing the appointments of bedrooms in apartments, to insist upon the presence of certain articles as essential. Questions of space alter almost every condition. The bed we know to be essential, and no consideration should induce any one to use a folding-bed. In a flat, as has been said so often, the supreme effort should be to keep as far as possible to the traditions of a house, avoiding makeshifts, and preserving the dignities in whatever you do. The bureau, dressing-table, night-table, and reading-table, the washstand, wardrobe, couch, and chairs, should all be present, but the eternal compromises have to go on. You must content yourself at times



“IN ORDINARY APARTMENTS, THEN, THE PILLOWS MUST BE LEFT
UNDER THE COVER”

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with a bureau, a mirror, and no dressing-table. You cannot always have a couch, but you can always, in your hangings, candles, pictures, and flowers, surround yourself with appointments so pretty and appropriate that even dwellers in houses may want to take from you an occasional hint.

CHAPTER VI

BEDROOMS : HOUSES

Modern German



WHEN one considers what the bedroom suggests in the way of personal habits, refinements, and niceties of life, a more than particular interest in it excites no surprise, since a discussion of its appointments involves questions not only of beauty and fitness, but of health, and a rounded development as well. The man or woman who has not slept well is the man or woman who cannot work well; and though an ability to sleep well depends primarily upon a certain men-

tal repose, there are many of us who cannot get that repose in uncongenial or unwholesome surroundings. The stuffy effects which are produced by heavy hangings or thick carpets would keep some awake all night. A thousand odors seem to

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lodge in them — stale, profitless suggestions of other days, when the sun was not allowed to shine, nor any breeze to blow, upon them. I could almost fancy myself surrounded by former denizens of the room, persons with whom I should not have a sympathy in common.

Neither could I sleep with maroon on the walls ; and many patients convalescing from fevers have told us what mental tortures they endured when forced to study from their pillows two vines that would not meet, or some geometrical figure that went on repeating itself indefinitely. There are women who will lie awake all night unless, as they express it, they can feel the sunlight in the feathers under their heads, and who insist that their pillows shall be sunned all day, first on one side, then on the other. Some doctors will not rest in rooms containing any furniture except the bed and night-table, — no carpet, no hangings, no upholstered things being permitted. I have sometimes been tempted to compare the bedroom to some secret chamber of the soul, where the individual retires for the refreshment which shall enable him to meet whatever difficulties his position may entail. For that reason, it seems to me that, like water, or air, meant for the refreshment of man, it should suggest a perennial purity. And certainly this has been the ideal of all advanced civilizations — whatever their customs, or the exigencies of particular climates, the question of the freshness and daintiness of the sleeping apartments has never been neglected. It might seem

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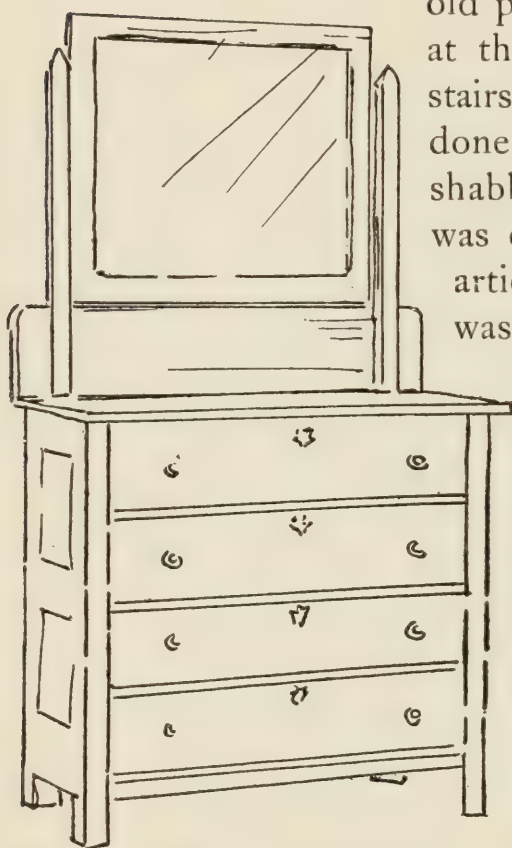
unnecessary to accentuate with such persistence the need of exercising a like care among ourselves, except that we see the subject so often neglected. I remember a young girl's bedroom into which I was once ushered with pride by her mother. An

old pair of woollen curtains hung at the window, — a pair sent upstairs when the front parlor was done over and they seemed too shabby for the first floor; the table was covered by another discarded article, of fringed woollen; the washstand, in an alcove, was concealed in similar fashion.

I did not wonder at the ill health of the young girl. The family doctor said it was a case of nerves. He never suspected the curtains.

In simple town or country houses, white woodwork is to be preferred, and when there is a wainscoting of white wood, a most interesting addition is made to the simplest of bed-chambers. The

ugly walnut of many old-fashioned town-house bedrooms is to be avoided; where it exists it should, if possible, be painted. The impression it makes is one of heaviness and gloom, the wood seldom being beautiful enough to justify its preservation. Pan-



Bureau for country cottages.

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elled walls, like those of old European houses, are another matter: the wood-work to which I refer is that which is found in the city house of a former day, when expensive wood, preferably walnut, was used in and about the doorways and windows, and cherished as the best evidence of the owner's opulence. Houses in Fifth Avenue, once regarded with pride by the moneyed magnates who dwelt there, and now used as tailor's fitting-rooms, are filled with this sort of decoration.

When, as is often the case in a rented house owned by an obdurate landlord, it is necessary to retain this wood-work, the question of paper or paint for the walls should be considered with especial care. Violent contrasts between wood and walls must be avoided. The tapestry paper, which, with such wood, is often good in dining-rooms, is too heavy for a sleeping-room. There are, however, excellent flowered papers which imitate old chintzes and Indian cottons, papers in which the white ground is not too defined, and in which the foliage is closely matched. I saw one such paper in a certain room. It had soft pink and brown chrysanthemums, with massed pale leaves. The green draperies of the room then took up the greens of the leaves and the colors of the flowers. They might equally well have taken up the golden browns. All the furniture was dark. A white enamelled bed would have stood out too clearly. The decorations were low in key; the light effects, so desirable in a bedroom, were obtained by the mirrors

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and pictures being framed without mats in dull gold. There was little on the walls; the surfaces were broken by tall mirrors to the height of the doors. Brass and crystal added to the general air of pleasantness. Fish bowls were filled with roses and ferns. The thin curtains at the windows were not white, but cream. I know another of these bedrooms done with yellow walls and mahogany furniture, the four-post bedstead being hung with a yellow damask.

In the choice of a color for the bedroom, individual predilections should be permitted, even if opposed to those which rule the rest of the household. A bedroom means an individual possession, a retreat in which the owner should be supreme. The rest of the house must, in its arrangement, take into consideration the needs of the family as a whole, have regard to the place which that family holds in life; but in a bedroom special attention should be paid to the taste of the person or the child whose province it is.

Color can be introduced in paper, paint, or hangings. In rooms occupied by servants who come and go, paint, of course, is a necessity. It is preferable in nurseries, unless the paper can be changed at frequent intervals, or, having been treated with varnish, can be washed.

Flowers on a white ground, up and down stripes, soft tones of a solid color with a border of flowers on a white ground, will, when the colors and designs are good, suggest that charming freshness without

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which no bedroom is successful. When a room is long and narrow, large-flowered paper should be avoided; indistinct up and down stripes are preferable. In such a room, too, a wainscoting, or a dado, or a line of book-shelves, is strongly urged; not that the room may be given a "decorated" look, but that the wall surfaces may be broken, and the upper parts supported. And books, by the way, belong to bedrooms, unless there is a morning-room reserved for the special use of the individual. For persons wanting to read at night there should be books on the night-table. A curtain over a book-shelf is only a cheap device, never to be recommended, although the fashion is bound to appeal to those who have shabby books to conceal, or shelves without any. When curtains are insisted upon, they should be of a wash material. When one has valuable books to protect, which are not daily companions, glass doors are used, and sometimes the glass is leaded.

When the wood-work is white the ceiling should be tinted to match the lighter tones of the walls, although a pretty fashion now permits the use of flowered paper overhead, which must, however, run down from the ceiling to the picture-moulding a foot or two below. In a low-ceiled room with curved or broken ceiling, the solid color will often run only to a height of five feet, the flowered ceiling being brought down to it. Here is a pretty plan: A ceiling and frieze of roses on a white ground, the darkest tone of the leaves repeating itself on the

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walls in burlaps or cartridge paper. This green color should also be repeated in a plain carpet. The rose tones are introduced again in soft hangings against the panes, while the roses reappear in the chintz of the curtains and cushions. In some English inns and country-house bedrooms the flowered paper covering the walls is copied in the chintz which frames the windows (the ceilings are left white), and the bed is trimmed with white.

Cream white wood-work, cream white bookcases with leaded glass doors, and hangings of velveteen toned like that of the mullein stalk, make the foundation of a charming room. Some of the plans suggested in the chapter devoted to apartment bedrooms may be followed in those of houses.

It seems almost impossible to lay down stringent rules about the floors of sleeping-rooms in houses, as one may for those in flats and apartments where the rooms are small, and there is no way of moving out furniture for sweeping. Prejudices for and against carpets seem bred in the bone, and are not to be overcome by reason. Every law of hygiene, however, makes for the bare floor and the rug, for something in which there can be no lurking of a microbe, now the bugbear of all quickened consciences. In the chapter devoted to the subject of floors, suggestions will be given for their treatment.

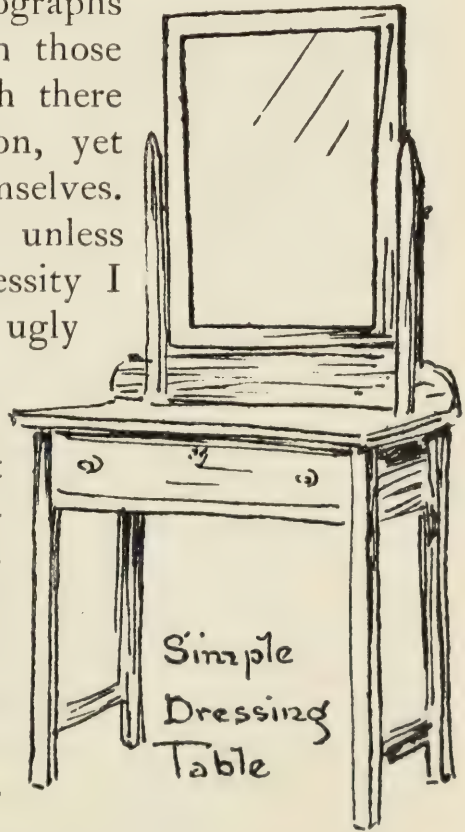
It is only when a house has been carefully designed that a bedroom mantel is made as it should be, bearing a relationship to the rest of the room. A good mantel must receive a more or less formal treat-

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ment, and in its decoration carry out the design or the plan of the architect or of the period which he follows. The clocks and the candlesticks should belong to the fashion of the mantel, and not represent haphazard purchases.

The fireplaces and mantels of the ordinary bedroom, on the other hand, put up by contractors, are seldom more than apologies, hideous to behold. They lend themselves to the most informal treatment, and may be filled with the photographs of friends, with books, and with those pieces of bric-à-brac with which there may be a particular association, yet which have no value in themselves. Mantels should not be draped unless necessity requires it — by necessity I mean the existence of lines so ugly that their softening or concealment becomes imperative. When a covering is used, it should match the other hangings. It is only with the painting, however (and the mantle must be painted to match the rest of the wood-work) that the householder should concern herself before establishing her belongings.

The articles necessary to an ordinary bedroom are: the bed, the bureau or dressing-table, the night-table, some chairs, and if there be no boudoir



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or morning-room attached, the lounge, the reading-table, the writing-table or desk, some shelves for books (never the cheap hanging shelf, however, that is suspended from a picture moulding). If there be no bathroom or dressing-room for the exclusive use of the occupant, there must of course be the washstand, ugly as it is. If two persons must occupy the same room, the screen is essential.

Of course in the arrangement of these various pieces of furniture, the size and proportions of the room must be taken into consideration, the positions of the doors, windows, and fireplace, as well as the needs of the occupants. When the arrangement has been completed you have the tact, the taste, the ingenuity of the occupant displayed. Here she proves herself, unfolds her character, her grace, her knowledge of requirements, her personal habits, and her consideration for others. The problem of one bedroom without a morning-room attached, has been successfully solved in this way :

In a "brown stone front" a double and a single room have been thrown into one, giving three north windows opening on the street ; two doors opposite these,—one leading into the hall, the other into a closet with hot and cold water. At right angles to the windows and at one end of the room is the fireplace, at the other end a blank wall. The wood-work and ceilings are white, the walls covered with a flowered paper. The curtains next the panes are white ; the thick curtains are of fine old blue satin trimmed with a band two inches wide, its colors re-



“AT THE FOOT OF THE BED IS THE COUCH FACING THE FIRE”

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peating those in the paper. In the middle window, under the sash, four shelves painted white have been placed. On the topmost, taking the place of the old-fashioned sill, are potted plants in bloom, — Chinese primroses in winter, hyacinths in spring, and tulips when they first appear, crocuses, and geraniums. On the under shelves some extra books are placed. The lower shelf is not fastened, thus making it possible to remove it when the room is swept.

The head of the bed goes against the blank wall with the night-table beside it. At the foot of the bed is the couch, facing the fire, one end being toward the window. To the right of the couch, on the side nearest the window, is the reading-table, with its books, flowers, and work-basket. A low chair stands by this table; another chair is at the other end of the couch. In this way, as it will be seen, all the movement of those who enter the room is from the bed — which becomes a subordinate feature during the day — and toward the fireplace, the living part of the room being in front of the fire, between the couch and chairs. Even the lights for reading have been arranged to make this concentration of interests possible. In no other place could the couch and table have the same results.

The writing-table is between the fireplace and the window, which arrangement permits the light to fall over the left shoulder. To balance this table, on the other side of the fireplace is a tall chiffonière. Between each of the windows are dressing-tables, one being reserved for the hair, the other for

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the last touches of the toilette, the putting on of the hat, and so forth. Between the two doors is a high chest with drawers below, and shelves protected by doors above for the bonnets. On the door leading into the closet and completely covering it, is a mirror with bevelled edges and no frame. A mirror on the door, by the way, is a delightful addition to a bedroom. Another mirror is over the mantel. All the furniture is of mahogany except the bed, which is painted white and trimmed with white, as it was when first imported into this country from France a century or more ago. Every provision for comfort has been made in this room, the owner having, as I said, no morning-room at her command.

When there is a morning-room, or library, as it is apt to be called in New York, the bedroom is without books or writing-table. Thus with white wood-work and ceiling and fireplace, there is in another brown stone house a bedroom with flowered paper. A bathroom immediately adjoins this, and is reserved for the exclusive use of the owner. The bed is opposite the fireplace and lengthwise against the wall, its head toward the window, and protected by a tall screen. It is of white enamel trimmed with brass, the valance and cover of finely embroidered French muslin over pink. The curtains, chairs, and couch cover are of chintz with pink flowers. There are two windows to the south in this room, the couch going lengthwise between them. The toilet-table stands at right angles to the window. Two tall chiffonières stand, one between the fire-



“THE HEAD OF THE BED GOES AGAINST THE BLANK WALL”

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place and door, the other between the two closet doors. No necessity for the exercise of particular tact in the arrangement of furniture existed in this room, which is reserved for the use of one person, and as a place in which to sleep and dress only. Therefore her need alone had to be considered. The owner's taste, then, has been displayed in knowing just what should be left out.

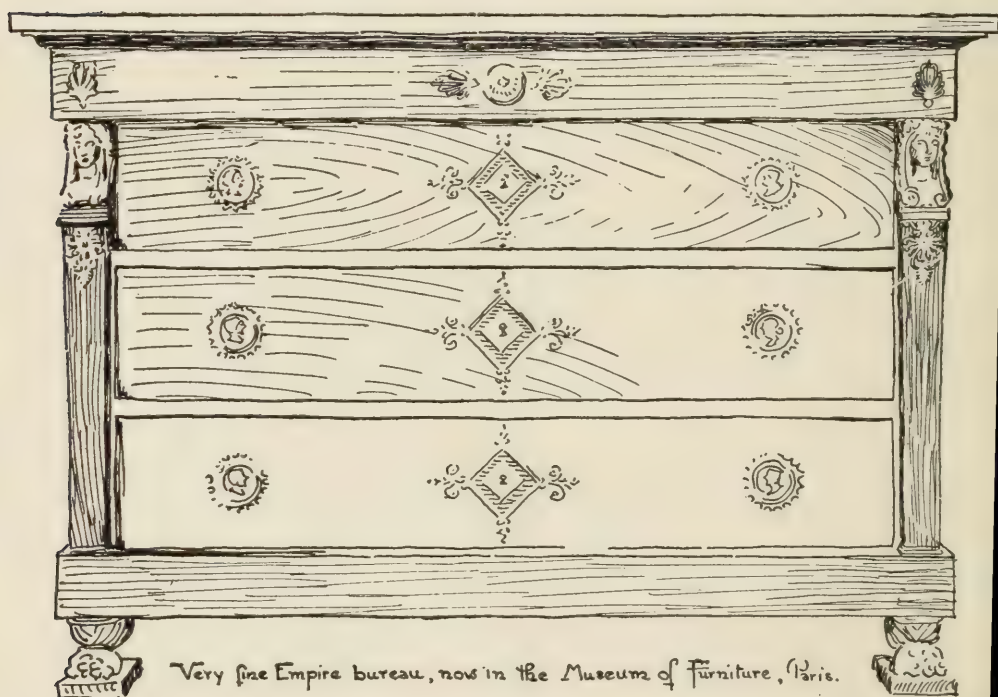
Curiously enough, the disposition of a bedroom lounge often presents itself as a perplexing problem to householders, who imagine it must go flat against the wall or out of the room altogether. The disposition of such a lounge, intended as it is for afternoon naps, or whatever quiet is taken with a book or a needle, is to be studied from its owner's point of view only, not as seats must be studied in a parlor where the point of view of a visitor or of the family as a whole must be considered. There should be a table beside the couch for the holding of a lamp and books.

When this couch is placed in a corner with its head toward the window, a table by its side, and with a row of book-shelves immediately behind it, it not only helps to make an agreeable composition in a room, but adds to the comfort and the pleasure of the idler, who has only to lift her hand to take what books she chooses from the shelf. But wherever it may be placed, the presence of this lounge is imperative in all bedrooms, and it is only when a room is too small to admit it, that its absence is to be excused. It should have on it a pillow or two,

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and a soft silk blanket neatly folded for covering the feet.

Sometimes, there are six or seven of these soft pillows, each pillow being finer and more beautifully laid than the other. When the couch is like a divan and pushed against the wall, larger pillows are provided as well, in heavy linen covers that have been



Very fine Empire bureau, now in the Museum of Furniture, Paris.

embroidered and trimmed with inlays of heavy lace. The large furniture establishments are full of couches from which a selection may be made. (Rooms that are made to follow some period must of course have couches belonging to that period, and if the householder cannot ransack an old palace for them, she must go to dealers in old furniture, not to designers of new.) When one's means are limited, a cot cov-

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ered with chintz, or a wash material, makes an excellent couch. Or again, in simple rooms the rattan couch is good, filled with cushions covered with cotton stuffs.

Properly speaking, the couch should never be covered with anything but a wash material. In elaborately appointed rooms, satins may be proper. Covers of heavy white lace are then thrown over them. This lace can be washed. Chintz is the generally accepted material. Effects of upholstered woollens are altogether reprehensible. A box spring put on castors or a support, and having a mattress on top, makes a comfortable couch. A slip cover can be made for it with a flat top and plain side pieces, the edges bound with braid. This cover can be taken off and laundered. Care should be taken with the braid. Something of cotton, not wool, should be used, otherwise the braid shrinks and the cover is rendered useless.

When a guest-room is to be arranged, extra care is required. In the furnishing of the guest-room there is greater need for the exercise of tact than in any other room of a house. Nowhere else does a hostess reveal herself so plainly as in the arrangement of her guest-rooms—not in her plans for a dinner-party, nor in her selection of flowers or other details of entertaining.

Guests on a visit are, in reality, at the mercy of their hostess, and although we should train our children to carry all the necessities of their toilet with them, even their writing materials, still, now

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and then a guest starting off in a hurry forgets something, or, going to spend Sunday only, has hesitated about taking a trunk sufficiently large to hold her possessions. Then, too, few visitors wish to bother their hostess about the coming and going of the trains or the mails, or for a glove-button or a shoestring. The tactful hostess should prepare for emergencies.

I wish a guest-room in a certain college town might be taken as a model. It has four large windows, the fireplace being between the two side ones. Opposite the front windows were the closet doors. Opposite the fireplace were two single beds, each with a night-table and an electric light arranged for reading. On one side of these a door led into the hall; on the other side another door led into the bathroom, a bathroom with provision made in it for all imaginable needs of its guests.

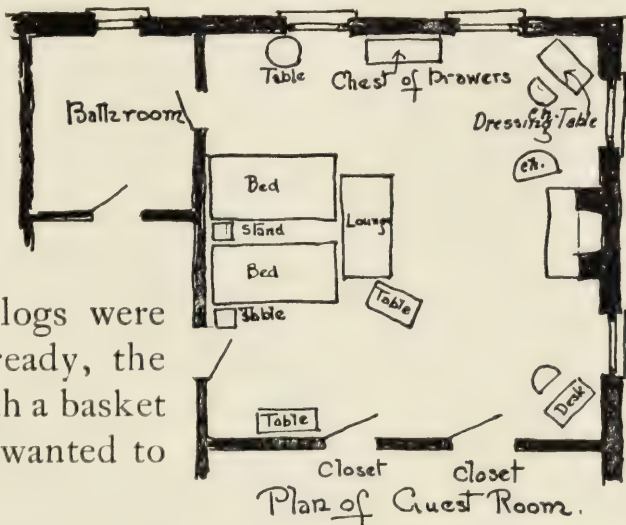
At the foot of the two beds and opposite the fireplace was the couch. On a table near by were a dozen of the latest books, and a silk work-bag filled with buttons, threads, needles, hooks and eyes. A tall chest of drawers stood between the two front windows. None of my hostess's best dresses were tucked away in it. Between the fireplace and one window stood the dressing-table; between the mantel and the other window, the desk. This desk had not only pens, paper, inks, pencils, stamps, blotter, rubber-bands, mucilage, twine, sealing-wax, candle, and pen-wiper, but a calendar, a time-table, and a list of the arrivals and departures of the mails.

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And the dressing-table! Not only were there brushes and combs, hat and clothes-brushes, nail-files and scissors, shoe-horns, pins, hat and bonnet-pins, toilet powder, but a tube of cream for chapped hands, and a bottle of soda-mint tablets. I never knew any other woman to remember the soda-mint tablets. On the table at the head of the bed was a night-taper in a glass for the timid sleeper afraid of the dark. A clock stood on the mantel, going! The fireplace was not empty. The logs were laid, the matches ready, the fire-irons near by with a basket of wood, when you wanted to replenish the blaze.

The wood-work and ceiling of this room were white, the paper a fine yellow-and-white stripe; the beds and all the furniture of mahogany. White dotted muslin hung next the panes, chintz curtains over it.

Mahogany furniture is a desideratum in the lives of all householders, but a bedroom can still be made pretty without it, if only light yellow oak beds and bureaus have found no lodgement in them. Then the case is almost hopeless. Paint the oak white if you must have it at all. Subordinate it. Get it out of your way. Otherwise



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you will sink your furnishing to its level, instead of lifting the room above it.

If you are in doubt about what should go on your bureau, — and many people are, — remember



The Duxbury Chair
Very light yet strong. Well
braced from the seat up.

that, like the sideboard, the well-appointed bureau or dressing-table must be first of all in spotless order, and then be pretty. No handkerchief-cases should lie on it, nor plush boxes for brushes and perfumes, nor any materials manufactured for the catching of dust. Photographs in frames are permissible, brushes and combs that are made for the purpose, with gold, silver, ivory, tortoise-shell, or wooden backs, but never the cheap ordinary brush which has no pretension to beauty and which should be kept out of sight.

I have sometimes been asked what distinction should be made between articles placed on a dressing-table or a bureau by correspondents who have evidently not understood that bureaus were invented for those who had no dressing-tables, or that a question of economy of space had governed the invention of the bureau. If, therefore, you have only a bureau

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in a bedroom, and must dress by its mirror, this bureau should be filled with fine toilet articles, brushes, combs, perfumes, and so forth. If you have a dressing-table, however, you do not want a bureau in the room, but a chest of drawers, either large or small, for holding underclothes, handkerchiefs, gloves, and veils.

A dressing-table is literally what its name implies, — a table to dress by. It is so made that the knees of the person who sits before it need not be obstructed as they would



Old Mahogany
Dressing Table.

be by the drawers of a bureau. It contains no drawers except for extra toilet articles. If by any chance there should be both a bureau and a dressing-table in the room, I should prefer removing the mirror from the bureau and treating the bureau as a chest of drawers. The mirror can be used elsewhere.

When the purchase of a dressing-table is an impossibility, one can easily be manufactured by covering an ordinary pine kitchen-table with denim. Across the top, however, there should always be a linen or wash cover, readily removed to be shaken or washed. White muslin, dotted, embroidered, or

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plain, over a color, makes a daintier table, of course, than the denim, but less durable.

The mirror over the dressing-table can be draped like the table, with the muslin; while dimity with an old-fashioned fringe, or a pretty chintz lined with a color, can be used in the same way. When the legs of the table are square, they can be covered with a chintz or cretonne, the material to be nailed on with brass-headed tacks. But whatever the material chosen or the fashion followed, the wash cover laid across the top is essential.

CHAPTER VII

BEDS AND BED-LINEN



Room Candlestick
w/ pottery with
er clover leaves
Dresden ware.

THE most important feature in every bedroom is, of course, the bed, and nearly every one has some fad about it. Certain monarchs, who had been soldiers as well, would never, even in their palaces, sleep on anything but the iron cots to which their service in camps had accustomed them. The kings and queens of other days slept in four-post arrangements more like royal hearses than anything else, so trimmed were they with nodding plumes and heavy funereal hangings. In one French palace the

guide will lift a coverlet belonging to the bed slept in by a certain Louis and his spouse, and show you the mattress divided, the king's side hard as a rock, the queen's side soft. In our day, in the larger establishments, two beds are often placed side by side, with a small table for books and candle between. At other times, the single headboard embraces hinged bed-frames, which can be swung apart

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to be made up according to the preference of the prospective occupant, and then pushed together and covered by the same spread.

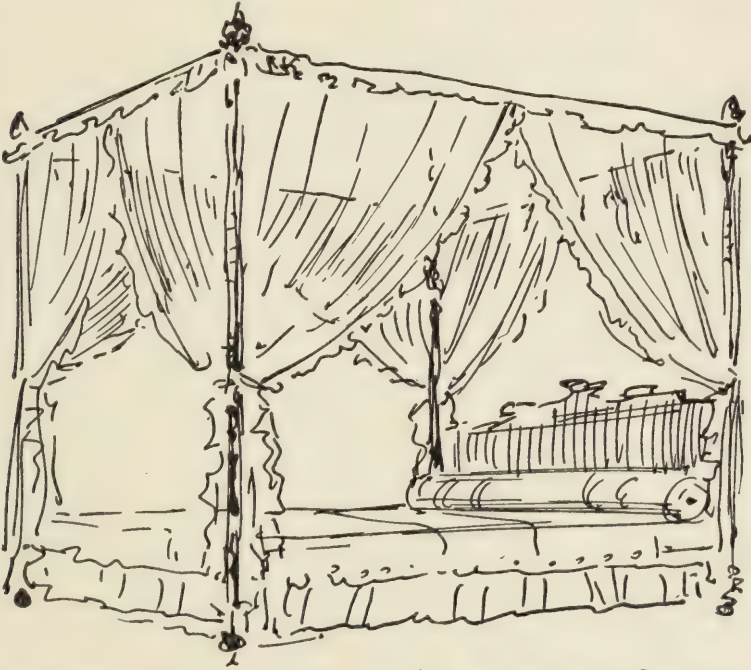
I know a trained nurse who is as fussy about her bed as any monarch who has been accustomed to a camp. She will not get into a bed with a valance on it. She thinks of microbes. Her hospital life taught her that. She fancies that no bed is well made unless it looks like one in a public ward, open for the inspection of the doctors, — not a hanging visible, and every vestige of an end tucked safely up, like the petticoats of a woman who must pick her way across a muddy street. On some other persons whom I know, a guilty conscience would never press as heavily as an eider-down quilt. They declare that as many physical ills are inherited with ancestral feathers as atavism produces in the moral world.

The carved beds of some ancient Swiss land-owners were nothing more than wooden closets, which could be wheeled about the room, and into which their owners could creep, barring the door behind them, secure against the assault of an enemy, or the more insidious effects of a draught. Orientals sleep on divans, in some districts without removing their clothes. They maintain, however, that the custom is more cleanly than our own, since they not only bathe before sleeping, but many times during the day.

Every new departure in household decoration, each new law of hygiene, seems to bring about new

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fashions in beds. In our day we have not only revived some of the models of old times, but we have, for the sake of cleanliness, gone extensively into metal and brass bedsteads. The white-enamel bed is always in good taste unless too elaborately trimmed with brass. Even when a bedroom is furnished in old mahogany, the enamelled bed, if of



Silk muslin mosquito netting over bed. Curtains, looped back in the daytime, are dropped at night.

good design, never offends. These beds may be single or double, plain or trimmed with brass. Sometimes the four corners are finished with upright pieces to support a tester, so that the bed may be hung as a four-poster. Such a bed is strongly urged for dwellers in country districts infested with mosquitos, where nettings are imperative.

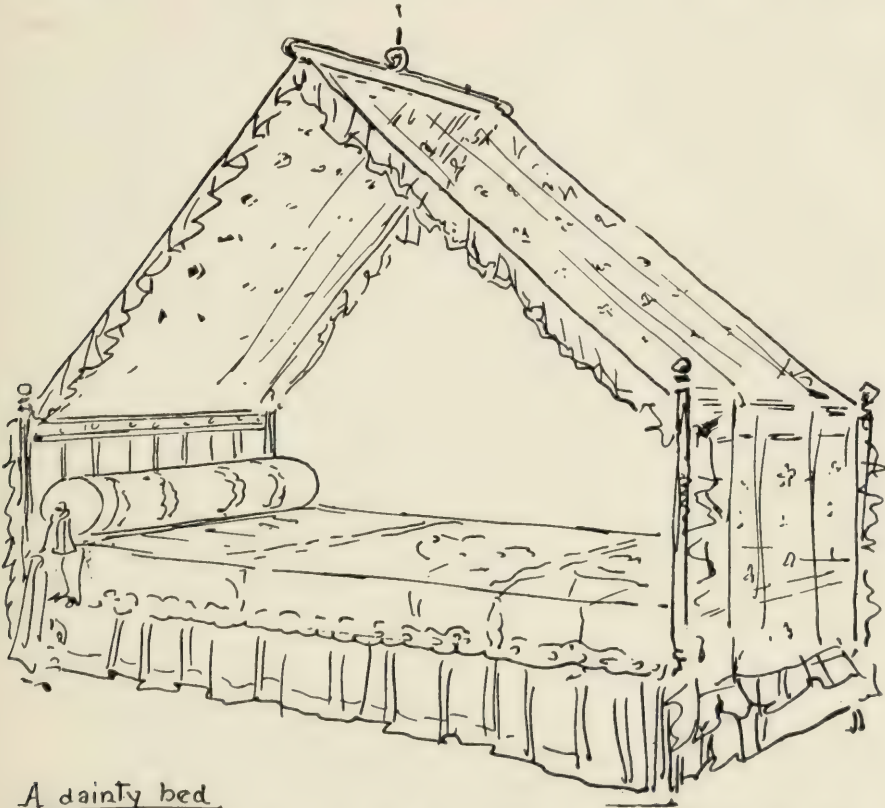
HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

Our mosquito nets, in this country, by the way, are wofully ugly, a disfigurement to almost any room; in Cuba, on the other hand, they are so pretty that they become an agreeable feature of the bedroom. There the beds are always provided with upright posts at the four corners, supporting the tester. The netting is then stretched flat across the top, and falls as curtains around the bed, the edges of which are ruffled or trimmed with color. Malaria, and worse than all, as experiments in Cuba have proved, yellow fever itself, is produced by the bite of the mosquito, so that to the Cuban householder the netting is a necessity, and any trouble necessary to make it pretty is considered worth while. In some houses belonging to wealthy Cubans, the mosquito nettings are made of fine pineapple cloth, while in Spain a silk grenadine with a narrow stripe of blue is often used.

On some of the modern enamelled beds the upright pieces are found only at the head; and support a canopy or half-tester, the curtain falling back of the head of the bed and on either side of the pillow, in this way protecting the shoulders of sensitive people who may fear draughts. In the hanging of these curtains and in the arrangement of the canopy, certain old fashions prevailing among the French are revived. The model oftenest followed is that of Marie Antoinette's bed in the Trianon. In certain country houses, when the valance and the bedspread are of muslin and trimmed with lace, a brass ring is fastened into the

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ceiling directly over the centre of the bed; into this ring a double brass bar the width of the bed is inserted horizontally, and so fastened that a white embroidered Swiss-muslin curtain may be slipped through it and drawn tight. This curtain falls



A dainty bed.

An embroidered muslin curtain suspended from a double brass rod hanging from the ceiling, falls over the ends of the bed to the floor.

over both the head and foot piece and reaches the top of the hem of the valance. It is edged with a full ruffle of lace, and serves to keep off breezes, besides adding immensely to the charm and daintiness of the bed.

Where the bed and its appointments are con-

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

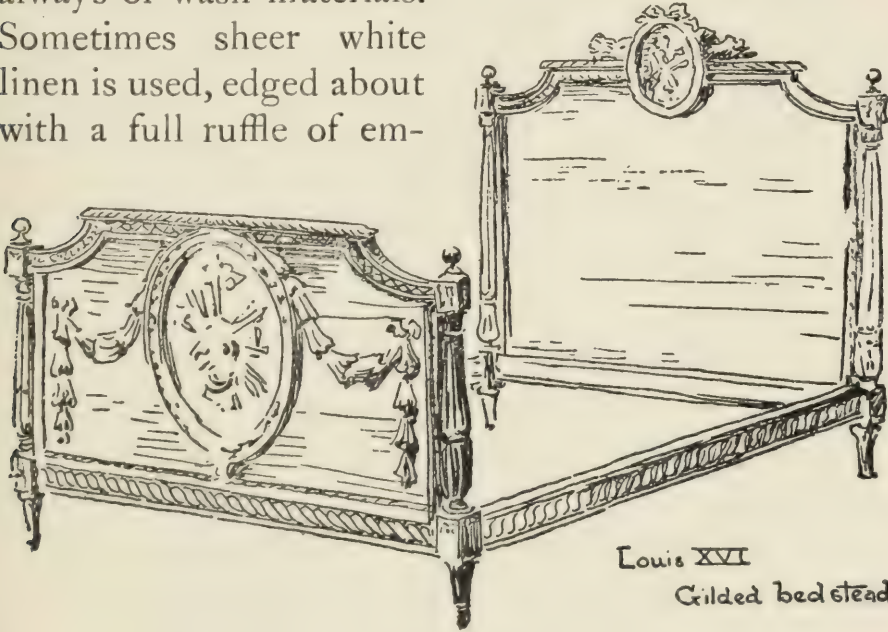
cerned, the aim of the housekeeper should be to create and maintain this impression of daintiness and charm. For this reason, where it is possible, the presence of a couch becomes a necessity in the room, so that the bed itself, once arranged, shall not be disturbed until nightfall. For the same reason, the pillows, with their ruffled and belaced edges, should be made pretty and becoming to the face. It is, to be sure, no longer the fashion to hold receptions in bed-chambers, the lady sitting among her pillows in a night-costume of stiff brocade, while the distinguished assemblage pays her homage; but the instinct to preserve appearances, even in a sick-bed, is to be commended. I sometimes believe Mr. George Cable touches upon an almost solemn subject when, in the "Grandissimes," he makes the lovely Aurore, just awakened and praised by her daughter, say, "Clotilde, my beautiful daughter, I tell you now because you don't know, and it is my duty as your mother to tell you, — the meanest wickedness a woman can do in all this bad, bad world is to look ugly in bed."

Within the last few years the fashion of multiplying the number of pretty little pillows has increased. There is one to be slipped beneath the head of the sleeper at night, and which the owner generally carries with her when she travels, so as to insure herself her accustomed comfort. There are others on the couch where she takes her nap in the afternoon. Sometimes these pillows are seen in finely appointed drawing-rooms; but only when the pres-

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ence of damask, or satin, or fine hangings make them possible. These pillows should be made of softest down — like that used for babies' cribs — covered first with a white or colored wash silk or fine batiste, so fashioned that it can be taken off to be laundered. The cases proper, however fine, are always of wash materials.

Sometimes sheer white linen is used, edged about with a full ruffle of em-



Louis XVI

Gilded bedstead.

broidery. But this represents the simplest form, although it is always sure to be a popular one, since a ruffle is always becoming to the face. The very finest linen cambric and French muslin are also employed in their manufacture, with the daintiest laces and embroideries for trimmings. Very often the case itself is embroidered with a special design, which follows the shape of the pillow; or the owner's monogram is used, finely worked, as on the best handkerchiefs. One favorite design shows a

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row of buttonholes worked round the edge of the pillow, through which a ribbon is run. At the four corners this ribbon is tied in bows. Very lovely pillows can be made, however, without any great cost, by using embroidered muslin which comes by the yard, and finishing the edges with a fine valenciennes lace gathered full.

Pillow-shams, as a rule, have disappeared. They are still used in certain old houses where domestic traditions are preserved, and where the possessions of the mistress are of so solid a character as to warrant her in a certain license of expression. Cheap cotton shams, trimmed with embroidery, are, however, out of the question on well-appointed beds. During the day the sleeping pillows are put away in a closet, only the bolster remaining, with perhaps one of the small pillows just referred to on the spread before it. Sometimes, when the cover is not drawn over the bolster, or the bolster itself is not covered separately and laid outside, a set of large day pillows, in fancy white linen cases, are used in finishing the bed. They are not to be slept upon, other pillows being substituted for the night.

It must be remembered that, even in the dressing of a bed, fashions change, and that each individual has his or her own theory as to comfort. Therefore the changing of pillows at night, the substitution of what looks well by day, has for its purpose one object only, — to eliminate the possibility of disorder, to give the bed a uniformed air, as it were, suggesting the fact that once arranged in the morning it is not

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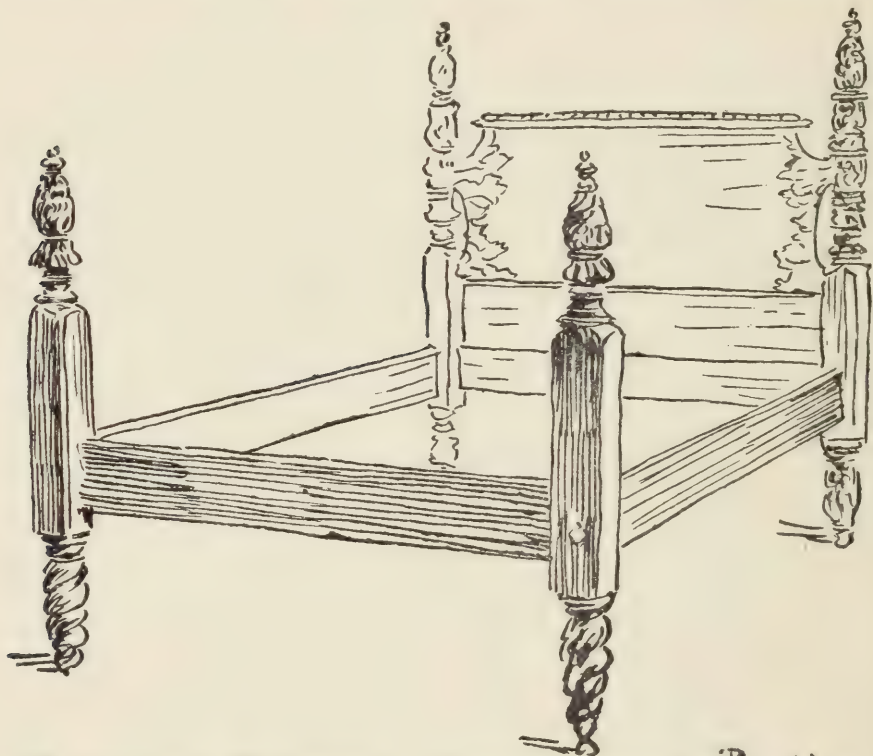
to be touched again until the maid turns it down at night. This, of course, destroys the possibility of sitting on it, as young girls, and some older women brought up in country districts, delight in doing. Some of these never seem to feel quite on friendly terms with a family unless they can sit on the edge of a bed, at times, and gossip. But wherever the more formal laws of life prevail, as they do in cities, the untidiness involved in the tumbling of the bed is not permissible. School-girls, congregated in one room to discuss festivities or clothes, will obey no rule of their elders, which is one reason why a young girl's bed should be dressed in white, with spreads that can be changed whenever necessary.

Because of this formal treatment of the bed, a couch, as I have already said, is almost a necessity in the bedroom. The marvel is that so many good housekeepers neglect to provide one, especially in a guest-chamber, where it is as important as the bed itself. A visitor would have to be bold, indeed, to disarrange one of the modern beds for a half-hour's nap before dinner.

Besides the metal beds already referred to, wooden ones of various styles, and often reviving some quaint fashion of the past, are once more increasingly popular. In many houses we can find the low Dutch bedstead, with its four posts and carved canopy; high mahogany four-posters, carved or plain; or charming four-posters like that shown in the illustration No. 10, where the tester is curved, not straight. Then there are the mar-

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quetry beds — beds made to imitate a swan, or with elaborately decorated columns, once belonging to some potentate across the water. These beds may be either single or double, though in most guest-rooms the best usage demands the placing of two single beds side by side, as many people prefer to



Low post Mahogany Bedstead, now in Brooklyn.

sleep alone even when occupying the same chamber. Almost any style of bed is accepted to-day, except those top-heavy walnut or rosewood structures with low footboards and headboards rising almost to the ceiling. It is a curious fact, too, that a beautiful bed, like a beautiful picture, may

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be found amid the simplest surroundings, without appearing out of place. It is only where the appointments are shabby, or where the bed is trimmed with tawdry stuffs and carelessly kept, that the sense of fitness is violated. A satin couch in a certain kind of room becomes positively offensive, where a carved bedstead finished with spotless hangings would impress you with the fact that the inhabitants were better educated than you had supposed.

For many years plain linen pillow-cases, and a spread of white Marseilles, were all that the most ambitious housekeeper desired. And there are few prettier beds to-day than those dressed in white, although occasionally the other appointments of a room may make a white bed too obtrusive, too defined, especially where the white coverlet is of a smooth and unbroken surface. When a thin white material is used it is better to soften it by an under color. Thus, in a room where the environment makes such a dressing possible and the wealth of the owner enables her to change her hangings when they become mussed or soiled, the metal bed shows a valance of sheer white French muslin, or cambric, over blue or pink. The white muslin is embroidered, or inlaid and trimmed with lace. It is used, too, for the bedspread, and covers the bolster, also over blue or pink. The little pillow, laid outside during the day, should match the spread and valance. Dotted or embroidered muslin may be used for the carrying out of a similar treatment. For apartments or the bed-chambers

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of country houses, wash materials, Anatolian cottons, chintzes, cretonnes, or white dimity, may be used with charming effect.

When the rest of the room permits the extravagance, the cover may be made of some rich old embroidered satin or silk, results of a forage in old palaces abroad ; brocades are used in this way, fine old damask, rare Japanese and Chinese embroidery, the half-tester or canopy being hung with them. But these stuffs, it must be again insisted, are never permissible unless the other appointments of the room are in keeping.

A pretty bedspread, designed by a royal English princess interested in applied design, shows white mercerized cotton worked with green leaves, which outline the square top of the bed, the centre being filled with embroidered roses scattered over it. This mercerized cotton, it is to be explained, is a comparatively new material for hangings, imitating, with its raised figures, the effects and designs of brocades. It is cheap and satisfactory when its colors are good ; the trouble, however, lies in its crudeness, or bad combinations of color. Another coverlet made by an American is of a heavy linen or crash, with green leaves and poppies scattered over it charmingly. "Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care" is interwoven in a running text among the flowers. Linen stuffs in various colors, and heavy linen laces, may be used successfully in the construction of similar articles.

In a pretty bedroom of a certain town house, an

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Empire bed — head and foot pieces of similar height and ornamented with wreaths of ormolu — has been pushed back against the wall of an alcove. The drapery, of richly embroidered satin, has been hung, tent-fashion, over it, but instead of leaving the wall bare, the satin has been caught up against it with a golden figure. Such an arrangement, like many of those just described, must only belong to rooms finely appointed in other respects. Propriety and harmony must be preserved. One must understand that such bed-furnishings belong to a woman whose other possessions correspond to them, and who has wealth enough to command a service sufficient to change or renovate her hangings whenever necessary, without disarranging her whole domestic establishment. Effective as this particular drapery is in its particular room, it would have been unendurable in any bedroom where the rest of the house suggested a careless management, and out of the question for a simple country house with mattings on the floor, or in a room cumbered by a sewing-machine and work basket.

When a woman is poor, and has only a limited number of servants or none, she must resort to soap and water when her hangings are to be freshened and the results of the season's wear are to be remedied. She cannot, like her more opulent neighbors, depend upon the linen-draper or the upholsterer; neither can she, in her purchases, yield to whims of fashion, nor discard an outgrown fancy. She must

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content herself with what she has, and what she has she must keep clean. She does not always remember this, and to save time and trouble she will buy a bedroom hanging that is both pretentious and unsuitable. A simple bedroom with spotless linen and dainty hangings will always hold its own, and compare favorably with the more sumptuous furnishings of elaborate apartments. Those of limited means, who may have tastes beyond their purses, should bear one thing in mind — the privilege of cleanliness, that finest of virtues, is always theirs. No wealth can command for them anything intrinsically finer. I once knew a young girl, forced to live in one of the dreariest and most desolate of small apartment-houses. It took all one's courage to enter the dark hall and mount the still darker and always dusty stairway. But once in her little apartment, with a view of her bedroom, one's whole attitude suddenly changed. Fresh white muslin was everywhere, and the atmosphere it imparted compelled admiration.

Four-posters, like the enamelled beds, may be dressed with flowered chintz, with dimities, muslins, or with richer stuffs. A New England four-poster, long cherished as an heirloom because for a single night it had sheltered the great Lafayette, was, I remember, hung with a yellow damask of beautiful tone; for the most part, however, these old beds were trimmed with dimities or chintzes or homespun linens, edged with home-made fringes, handed down from generation to generation. There was always a valance, and the coverlet might match or not, but

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the valance on the tester was always of the same stuff as that on the bottom of the bed, as were the curtains, which sometimes fell on all four sides, or appeared only about the head. The tester itself, when curved, was topped with material laid perfectly plain, otherwise the stuff was full and drawn to a button in the centre. Under the direction of an artist, an old carved four-poster has been hung with a valance and curtains of the softest velveteen of an exquisite green, a green that in some lights shows the very silvery quality seen on the leaves of the apple-tree in the spring. At the head of the bed, in the space between the top of the headboard and the tester, there is a large plaster cast of the Singing Boys, toned to a soft ivory white. The rest of the room is in ivory white and green.

From what has been said, it will be seen that a bed need follow no arbitrary fashion in design or construction. These details are governed by the tastes of individual owners, each man or woman being entitled to his or her own way of sleeping most comfortably, but that, while yielding as it does to personal requirements, good taste demands that it be well appointed, and by the term "well appointed" absolute freshness and daintiness of detail is implied. It will be seen, too, that the bedstead is one affair, its hangings another, and that for this reason a beautifully carved bedstead may be appropriate amid the simplest surroundings, as it was in the old Dutch houses, but that the proprieties are altogether violated when certain stuffs are

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introduced as hangings, when the cheap and tawdry are permitted, and when the magnificence of the opulent is imitated by those who have not the means to make their finery appropriate.

I suppose every newspaper office having a household department receives letters from young housekeepers and brides-to-be asking what must be purchased for the new home, how many sheets and pillow-cases, how many tablecloths and napkins, how they should be marked, and where, how large the letters should be, whether a color should appear or the marking be done in white. No one should begin housekeeping with less than a dozen sheets for each bed, except where there are two beds of one size, when she can get along with eighteen or twenty for the two. There should always be a surplus to be called upon in cases of necessity.

A short upper sheet is an abomination, the very desolation of wretchedness. For that reason many housekeepers have separate upper and lower sheets, the upper sheet made long enough to fold half-way down over the blanket. This upper sheet is often elaborately trimmed with embroidery, heavy lace, and hemstitching. It not only adds to the general appearance of the bed, but preserves the blankets as well. Unless the lace and embroidery are in themselves both beautiful and appropriate, the simple unadorned sheet is preferable.

The monogram, or letters, always appears in the middle of the sheet, just above the hem. Colors are not used in the marking of bed-linen. The best

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sheets are of linen, although there are some persons who dislike the feeling, preferring a fine cotton.

When a bed is to be made up with a chintz or an embroidered silk cover, there is always a thin spread, or cover, put over the blankets. This is also laid across the bed when one is ill, and there is much passing back and forth by the bedside. Nothing heavy should be used.

Pillow-cases, like sheets, should be marked just above the hem. Sometimes the monogram appears in the centre of the pillow, but the work must be fine or the effect is unpleasant. When letters are used, either on the sheet or the pillow-cases, they should not be more than an inch in height.

It would be altogether delightful if each person could have all the pillow-cases and linen needed, but even when one can afford to buy them, there is not always, in most houses, room to keep them stored. A linen-closet, that delight of all house-keepers, is out of the question, for instance, in the average apartment, and only sufficient linen to supply actual need may be purchased. The number to be bought by brides, therefore, must depend upon the number of beds to be furnished, and then upon the amount of space available for keeping that which is in use; but in these days of ready-made household articles, it is always easy to replenish stores quickly, when emergencies arise. A pretty fashion, when there is no room for a linen-closet, is to keep the linen in a cabinet having glass doors and sides. Everything can be put away in sets, and tied to-

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gether with ribbons. Elastic bands finished with bows of ribbon and with clasps, like garters, may be used to secure the pile of pillow-cases, saving the housekeeper the trouble of tying a fresh bow every time the set is disarranged. Underclothes are often kept in similar cabinets when the closet room is limited.

Besides the linen pillow-cases, there should be thin inside slips to put under them. This inner cover, made with buttons and buttonholes, need not be changed as often as the outside case. It serves to protect the ticking and keep it clean,—a desirable object. These slips are of especial importance in rooms used by servants, where they can be of unbleached cotton, tied with tapes, the cotton to be as thick as the ticking itself. They should be carefully fitted.

No bedroom linen is complete unless it includes a number of covers for bureaus and tables. Face towels, used for covering these pieces of furniture, are well enough in their way, but only in cases of necessity. When a costly piece of heavy lace is used on a bureau or dressing-table, a piece of thick glass with bevelled edges, and exactly matching the table top in size, is sometimes placed over the lace, the dusting and cleaning of the glass being an easy matter, while the lace underneath is kept spotless. The toilet articles then stand on the glass. Covers of drawn linen-work made to fit the tables should be included in a list of bedroom linen. A fine bird's-eye makes a pretty cover, trimmed with

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narrow fluted ruffle of white cambric or wash lace. Fine white linen, embroidered with the owner's monogram, and trimmed with white lace or finished with hemstitching, always suggests the careful and fastidious housekeeper. Dutch, Hungarian, and German embroideries are good. Dotted-muslin covers trimmed with wash lace are very dainty for tables and bureaus. They can be changed as often as necessary.

The prejudice against feather beds and down comforters is so strong in some houses that even an eider-down quilt is prohibited. Extra blankets are used on cold nights, or comforters of medicated wools, covered with silk, and trimmed with lace. Many people prefer buying new comforters each season, covering them with a cheaper material, and throwing them away when they are soiled. Pink, or blue and white worsted blankets and afghans, trimmed with lace and ribbons, are used on beds and couches; so are silk blankets. When the eider-down quilt appears it is generally of satin and embroidered. Laces and ribbons are used in profusion on quilts, comforters, and knit blankets, but are only admissible when, as insistence has often been made, the householder can afford to throw away or replenish articles as they grow shabby.

CHAPTER VIII

BATHROOMS

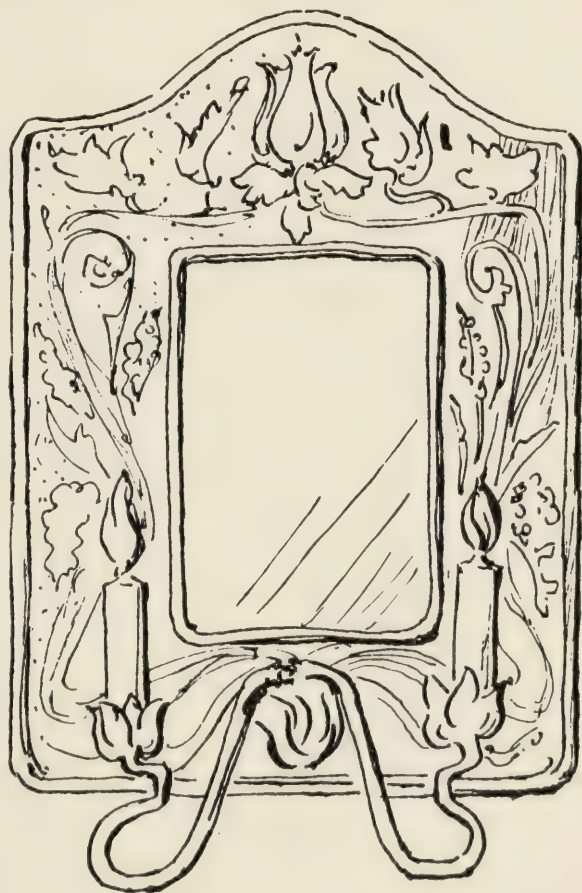
IT used to be the cry of returning travellers from abroad that no conveniences for bathing existed in Europe, and that for a good honest tub, with hot and cold running water, one must come back to this country. In reality, however, such travellers know nothing about the charms of baths abroad, neither how to order them, nor yet how to take them when obtained, — nothing, in fact, of those baths in Paris where a maid in cap and apron wheels into one's bedroom in the morning a copper tub on rollers, with a clean linen sheet laid inside, another sheet on her arm to be spread over an easy-chair, in which one is to be seated on stepping from the tub. And then the towels! — in a copper bucket, also on rollers, and tucked away in compartments, a separate compartment holding hot water for heating them, so that when the half a dozen towels are taken out they are found to be as warm as though they had been heated on the high fender of one's own nursery fire. Until lately what had we to match these delights? To-day, to be sure, most houses have a bathroom on each floor, and a house of any importance has one for every member of a family. Some thirty years ago such

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arrangements were not required: even in Newport they did not exist. One bathroom to a house was often considered luxurious enough. I do not remember a single genuine Colonial house that was originally built with a bathroom. There was no sign of any in General Washington's house at Mount Vernon.

Even in our own day, outside our great cities, we can boast few conveniences for bathing. In few of our newest summer hotels are there more than three or four bathrooms for the use of all the guests, and a bath every day becomes the most expensive of luxuries. The guests are forced in self-defence to provide their own tubs, and then a fee must be doubled to secure enough hot water to fill them in the morning.

People travelling from place to place who are obliged to go to the small hotels of our country towns tell us that in winter a bath in one of these places is almost an impossibility, since the single



Electric Light Bracket.
hammered brass.

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faucet (for cold water only) is always turned off with the first coming of the frost, and the tub itself made a receptacle for dustpans and brooms. When bathtubs were introduced into tenements in New York, they were filled with dirt by the tenants, and used for the growing of vegetables and greens. In many instances the winter coal was stored in them.

The development among us, indeed, of the modern bathroom is one of the interesting signs of the times. In our small apartments they are often the one desirable feature of the flat, being better built and appointed than they are in many an old-fashioned, four-storied, brown-stone house, and better ventilated even than the bedrooms. Open plumbing is now considered imperative; the heavy look of the old bathrooms, with everything encased in walnut, is no longer possible. Varnished papers and tiles have taken the place of woods and oilcloths, glass shelves that of wooden ones.

In many of the sumptuous houses of the day the bathroom alone frequently costs ten or twenty thousand, sometimes more. The splendid baths found in Pompeii or the Alhambra, or the cities of the Mediterranean, are copied. The floor is covered by a single slab—the tub cut from a solid block of marble. The cost is in the exquisite workmanship and in the materials used. High up on the mountains of the Island of Majorca I once saw one of these baths, restored by an Austrian prince for his daily use. A colonnade of wonderful Saracenic columns enclosed a rose garden;

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outside, some of the bushes grew against the windows, filling the huge marble bathroom with a cool, green light. The square marble tub, itself larger than many a prison cell, stood on a raised platform at one end. Round the other three sides of the room and against the walls ran low benches, on which the bather could recline and rest. And this in a wild and rugged country, inhabited only by peasants, except when the prince and his suite took up their residence on his estates. The interesting point to me was that the most primitive conditions existed in the rest of this particular lodge, all the cooking being done with charcoal on high stone tables against the walls, like those seen in the houses of Pompeii.

These square marble or tiled bathtubs are to be found in our newest houses, where they take the place of the porcelain-lined tubs which once marked so wide a step beyond the tin tubs of an older generation. Sometimes they are set in the floor, approach being had to their depths by marble steps. In some of our modern country houses, with an inexhaustible water supply, swimming pools and bathing places are found in separate buildings. The buildings are constructed of wood or marble. The great tub below the floor-level is surrounded by ferns and growing plants. Everything possible is done to revive the beauty and the sumptuousness of the ancient bath. For all that, we do not yet approach the splendor of the ancients, nor even the luxury of many Europeans. We crowd too

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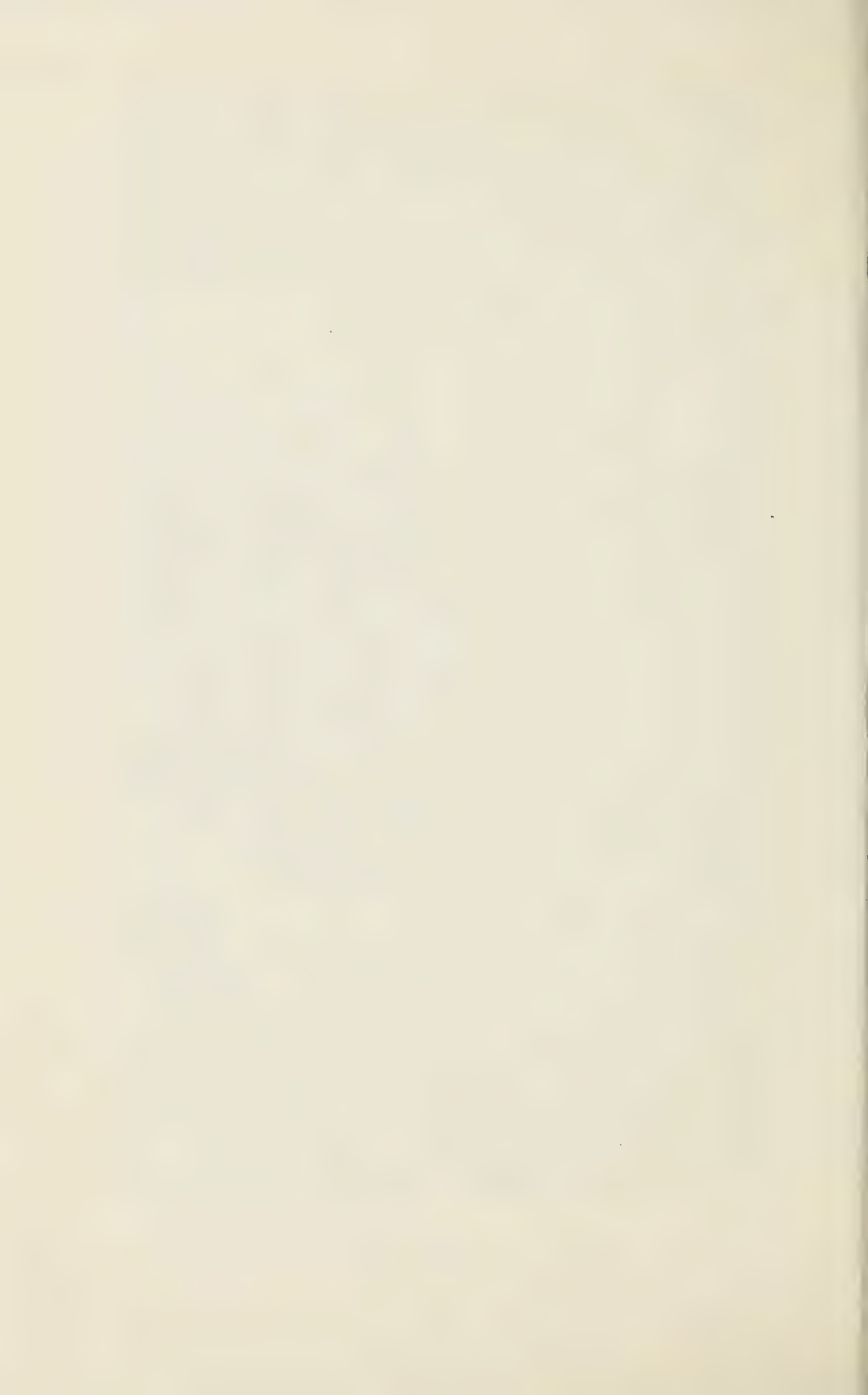
much into one room, — the bath, the basin, the sitz, and the shower, — the cost of land in a town making this economy of space advisable, perhaps. One sometimes wonders, however, why in country houses, where there is plenty of land, the fashion of some foreigners is not adopted, each of the several articles just named being put in separate rooms; the bathtub in one, the basin in another, and so on. The floors of some of these luxurious bathrooms are of alabaster heated from below, a seashell sunk in the floor forming the bathtub, the faucets being of swans' heads and gilded.

The question of color should never be neglected, even when a bathroom and its appointments are simple. A moderate-sized bathroom in a modest city house has been transformed in this way: The floor is of white tiles, the bathtubs and basin are of white porcelain, a varnished paper showing pink roses and leaves covers the walls and the ceiling. The wall-space is broken by a mirror running from the floor to the same height as the top of the window. The window itself is of a leaded glass of pinkish tone, the curtains are soft green China silk, taking up the color of the leaves on the rose vines. China silks, it must be remembered, are easily laundered. All the pipes in this instance have been gilded.

Another bathroom, overlooking the trees of the Park, is entirely constructed of green and white marbles of charming tones. Evergreens fill the outside window-boxes in winter. In the spring these boxes are filled with flowers in bloom.



"THE YELLOW OF THE BRASS AND THAT OF THE WINDOW
REPEATED EACH OTHER"



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The possibility of making any bathroom both dainty and charming is not denied the very humblest. In some apartments, where the bathroom is tiny, this has been done. The floor and dado were of the usual white tiles. The tub itself was porcelain lined. The pipes were nickel plated, exposed according to sanitary laws. The panes were of plain glass. The wise owner laid a plain green rug on the floor, and covered the walls with a varnished wall-paper showing a yellow iris with green leaves, ducks and swans paddling in the water surrounding the blossoms. For the plain glass window she substituted a leaded yellow crackle glass costing ten dollars. She made her curtains of green silkoline, cut with two straight pieces felled and hanging straight on either side, with a ruffle across the top to break the awkward space. With this crackled glass, sufficient privacy was secured the bather during the day, without the need of a curtain falling over the panes. At night a yellow shade is drawn. As the bathroom is small and without room for a basin, a board painted white with enamel paint was laid across the tub and set with a large brass basin and pitcher highly polished, so that the yellow of the brass and that of the window repeated each other and filled the room as with sunshine.

Another improvement was made later, which it is to be hoped may be adopted by landlords for the convenience of tenants in small bathrooms. The hot and cold water-pipes at the head of the tub were tapped, and the new pipes made to run up for some

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four feet, and end in hot and cold water faucets, emptied by a single projecting arm. Into the side wall a swinging bracket, ending in a wide ring or hoop, was fastened. Into this ring or hoop, a basin was fitted. On either side of the basin there were handles, so that it could be easily lifted and emptied without making the tub below untidy. The convenience of this arrangement can hardly be too strongly insisted upon, and is to be urged wherever a stationary basin is not possible in a bathroom.

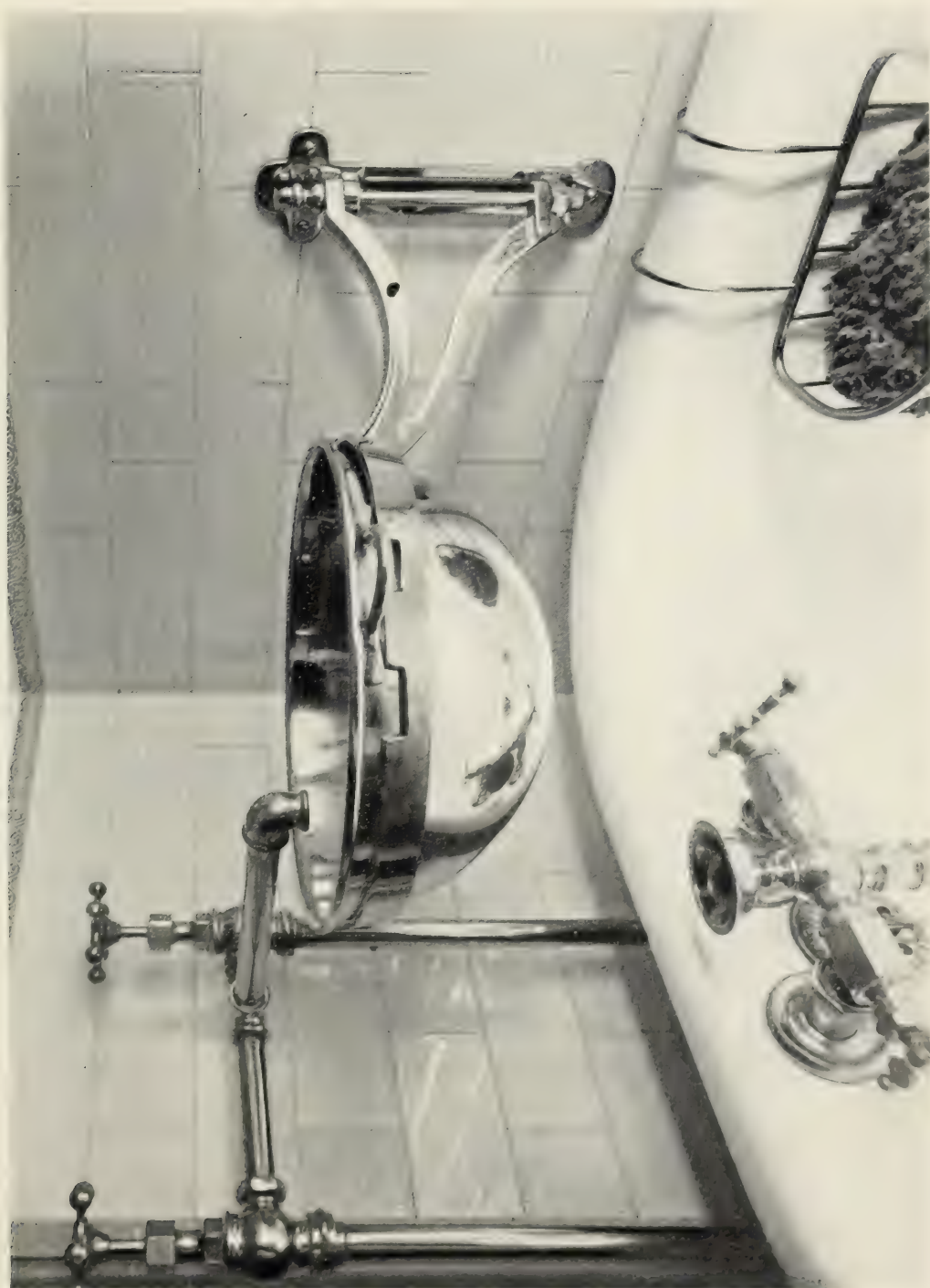


An interesting piece of Colonial glass
4'0" long

The tenant who objects to expending ten dollars on a leaded window, and who still wants the color,

may paint her window with oil paints mixed with varnish to imitate stained glass.

A bathroom corresponding in size to that which has just been described, was given an altogether different air by a varnished paper gay with climbing roses, covering walls and ceiling. The white window-panes were in this instance left untouched, curtains being shirred on the sash. The dotted white muslin with ruffled edges is repeated in the covers made for the shelves, — those holding the powders, the toilet waters, and the toothbrushes. A long mirror fills one wall, apparently increasing the size. No rug covers the floor tiles, a bath mat being laid there when required. Over the tub is a swinging bracket, like



“THE HOT AND COLD WATER-PIPES AT THE HEAD OF THE TUB WERE TAPPED”

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those used for holding the large glass vessels of colored liquids seen in apothecaries' windows. Painted white to match the rest of the wood-work, with its brightly polished copper pitcher and basin, it becomes an interesting addition to the room.

Thus it will be seen that even the smallest of bathrooms, and those identically alike, may have a distinctive touch lent them by the taste of the tenant.

Every year the stores are filled with new fashions in varnished papers for bathrooms. Sometimes the design shows a trellis with an interlacing of vines and flowers so that the effect of a bower is produced: Sometimes it is purely conventional, representing tiled walls of blue and white or different colors. These tiled papers often show tulips and roses in each square, or for children are especially designed with Kate Greenaway figures. Any paper may, however, be varnished, the varnish adding in many cases a certain richness of tone to the colors beneath.

Blue and white is always good in a bathroom, the blue and white of the walls being repeated in the blue and white of the bath mats, or the oil-cloth or linoleum on the floor. Linoleum or oil-cloth is always to be urged in bathrooms where the floors are bad, as they are in many of the old-fashioned sort. A rug is easily shaken and gives sufficient warmth to the feet. When varnished papers, marbles, and tiles are out of the question, a bathroom may still be made interesting. Resort must then be had to the painter. A white enamelled paint,

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for instance, may be divided into four-inch squares by blue lines to imitate tiling. When one is clever at stencilling, a decorative design may be added as a frieze: on white walls, when the enamelled paint below has been made to represent a tiling of green and white, sea-horses and sea-shells conventionally arranged may be stencilled in green just below the ceiling as a frieze. If blue is used, the stencil may follow a different pattern. When the plain wall-space between is filled by a mirror with a white frame, or if the mirror is framed with a wash material like that shown in the border of the curtain, the simplest and most unpretentious of bathrooms may be altogether transformed.

In elaborately appointed bathrooms, mirrors are made to serve important purposes, being nothing more nor less than doors to closets. In many instances a small mirror is made to conceal a cabinet for medicines. Sometimes this cabinet appears as a projection in the room, placed over the washstand and shelf. In more elaborately fitted bathrooms, the cabinet is sunk into the wall; the mirror then



Stencilled border for bathroom.

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appears as part of the wall-surface, no suggestion of the concealed door being given. The touching of a spring throws the mirror back and the cabinet is revealed. As everything in these days made after an approved fashion must be antiseptic, this cabinet is also of tiles like the walls, and the thick bevelled-glass shelves on which the medicines are placed can be taken down and washed. This glass is expensive, and where you find it beyond your means, you are strongly urged to have your bathroom shelves so made that they can be readily removed and as readily scrubbed.

Something to hold medicines and simple household remedies is of paramount importance in bathrooms, especially in those attached to guest-rooms, and still more especially when those guest-rooms belong to country cottages. Guests, taken ill during the night, may be reluctant to disturb a family. One of the cleverest of housekeepers and the most considerate of hostesses gave me a list of things which she keeps in hers, — camphor, Pond's extract, quinine, Jamaica ginger, mustard plasters, whiskey, brandy, camphorated vaseline, absorbent cotton, a new toothbrush, and a new spool of dentist's silk, a spirit-lamp, alcohol, and smelling salts. On the shelf above the washstand she has listerine, lait d'iris, a toilet powder, and a toilet water, both a tooth powder and tooth wash, besides some preparation for chapped hands. These might have been placed on a small table near by had there been space. Behind the bathroom door dressing-gowns of Turkish

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towelling are hung for the convenience of the bathers.

In any bathroom, certain essentials should never be neglected : A bath mat, to be laid before the tub when a bath is taken, which should then be hung out to dry ; a small portable basin, — one of papier-maché is best. There should be sponge baskets too, and wire soap-dishes. When a room is large enough, a chair, or a seat of some kind, must be provided, and either hooks or a bench on which the clothes may be hung or laid. A table easily moved about is, when possible, desirable. This should hold the nail-files and the scissors and other essentials of the toilet, besides some extra soaps.

Even in the family bathroom there should invariably be a number of towels that have not been unfolded ; and just as one's best table linen should be reserved for special entertaining, so there should be certain towels reserved for like occasions. These towels, it ought to go without saying, should never show a colored stripe. Once in the house of an important personage at our national capital, when a woman of newly made fortunes threw her house open to several hundred guests, there were in the ladies' dressing-room towels with red-striped borders, arranged with great care on a rack. " I knew she would betray herself *somewhere*," said a woman near me, pointing to the towels.

Among the very rich the towels reserved for these occasions have elaborate monograms — drawn work, or embroidery at the border — but all in white, the

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monogram being placed just above the end. These towels should only be used for the face or the hands. Bath towels are of the coarser, rougher kind, meant to stimulate the circulation by rubbing. Bird's-eye makes a delightful towel, either when simply hemmed and marked with a letter, or when finished with hem-stitch and monogram. Glass rods and shelves are used for towels ; when these are not possible, a simple rack is always in good taste. A bathroom is always marred by the presence of rumpled and carelessly tossed towels, the display of too many bottles, and exhibitions of underwear. Like a dining-room table, a bathroom should be put in spotless order after each occupant. The insistence upon so self-evident a fact might seem absurd but for the fact that many housekeepers, priding themselves upon the possession of good taste, permit a bathroom to become a receptacle for a motley collection of personal belongings and the baby's entire outfit.

When one lives in a cheaper country house where a bathroom with running water is an impossibility, one should provide oneself with tin tubs to be placed in the bedrooms at night for use in the morning. The custom is then to have a large piece of Turkish towelling laid on the floor, the tub to be placed upon it. Each guest should be asked if a hot or cold bath is desired. An extra can of cold water being left by the tub, the maid in the morning brings in a can of hot water and prepares the bath.

In Paris, and more recently adopted in this country, there is a copper or brass tank easily

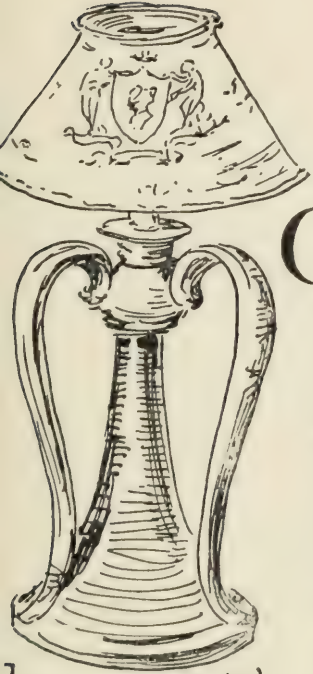
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arranged in any bathroom for the heating of water by gas, the water being heated as it passes through the cylinder. This arrangement is desirable in those houses where the boiler in the kitchen is too small to supply the needs of the family. It is by no means an ugly object, rather interesting than otherwise, especially when it is kept brightly polished.

When one lives by the sea and wants to bathe out of doors unobserved, a charming fashion is to build a small tea-house with dressing-rooms, near the bathing pool or beach. The bathing-pool and tea-house should be screened and protected by bushes and shrubs, the path through them being hidden. In one instance a bathing-pool was built of cement. The water from the ocean being too cold for the ordinary individual, it was brought into the cement basin, where it had a chance to warm in the sun. A platform for diving was arranged. The tea-house which overlooked the pool was furnished with verandas and porches, hung with awnings, and made delightful with vines. Inside were all the appointments of the bathing pavilion of seaside resorts, so that it was possible for the hostess and her guests to bathe as the less favored must on a public beach, without the pastime being vulgarized by brass bands and cameras.

CHAPTER IX

DINING-ROOMS



Large candlestick
of heavy green
pottery. Shade
of parchment
with heraldic
design.

ONLY those who have had to grope their way alone through the errors and the agonies of furnishing a house can understand the difference between the problems presented by the parlor and the dining-room. The problem of one is Protean; the solution of the other, comparatively simple.

Utility alone, the silver and china used on the table, may be represented in the decoration of the dining-room without the violation of any law or the suggestion of a limited mental horizon. But a parlor is a place of recreation, and in it we must gather certain possessions which represent our way of being refreshed. I may find my recreation in books and pictures; another may find it in pictures and flowers; some one else may find it in music; a fourth person, in collecting beautiful porcelains; a fifth, in games in which the children join. Without these evidences of individual tastes the parlor of a house might as

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well be the parlor of a steamboat. A dining-room is not dependent upon them for its excellence. We may be musical, literary, or artistic without having to betray that fact in the decoration of our dining-rooms.

There is another curious difference between dining-rooms and parlors and in what they suggest of the mental and social habits of a family. The dining-room may be perfect in all its appointments. It may bear everywhere about it a certain stamp of authority. You may recognize at once that for generations its owners have dined well, that they have understood what all the niceties and observances of the table should be. The parlor, however, may disenchant you at once; prove to you, in the choice of the pictures, the hangings, and in the arrangement of the furniture, that whatever its owners may have mastered about the art of eating, they have bothered themselves little about the cultivation of other arts. Their parlor is used only as a gathering place between meals. You see this difference sometimes in the houses and apartments of bachelors and people who know a good table but know nothing about a good book.

Sometimes, it must with sorrow be confessed, those who do know a good book know nothing of a good dinner, nor of how it should be served. They are unconscious of the need of finer observances about a table; ignorant of the fact that the success of a dinner bears any relation to the surroundings in which it is eaten. Although the

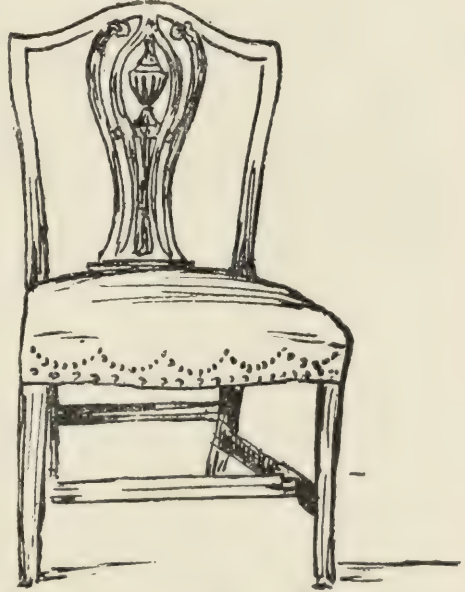
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parlors and the living-rooms of these people may have convinced you of their intellectual and moral attainments, their dining-rooms, when you see them, will give you an uncomfortable shock.

My first perception of this truth came with a visit to a house newly bought, without regard to cost, and exhibited with pride by its owners. It was intelligently planned, filled with the best of old mahogany, with books in choice bindings, and superbly finished throughout. But in passing through the dining-room I saw on the dinner-table a rumpled white cloth.

Had the table been well set in the beginning, and but recently abandoned, the effect would not have been so disastrous — few things are more interesting than a table with the chairs of the departed dinner guests pushed back, the open napkins, the half-filled wine-glasses, the fruits, the flowers, and the lights — but no stiffly starched tablecloth would have been used; certainly none that was rumpled.

Perhaps the ugliest dining-room to be found the world over is that of the small rented apartment or flat, with an oak "chair rail," a gilt paper, and an over-done oak mantel. Its dreariness cannot



Chippendale chair.
Easthampton, IL

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be realized except by those who have suffered from it. Added to the general wretchedness of color and design, is the fact that it is often the only passage-way from the kitchen to the front door.

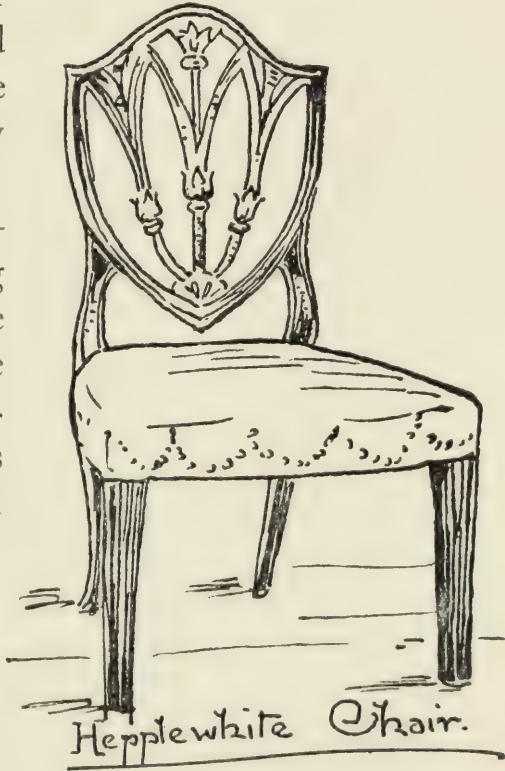
The first thing to be done by way of improvement is to tear down the gilt paper. And what a sigh of relief will follow its departure. The over-mantel must come down, too, and be confided to the janitor's care. If that is out of the question, and the monstrosity is really part of the construction, regard it as a dispensation sent by Providence to afflict you. For a sore affliction it will prove itself, always insistent and obtrusive. The only way of meeting the situation gracefully is to ignore it. Never draw attention to it by placing a single article in its neighborhood, hoping, perhaps, to better the case. You would only make matters worse. Ornaments are not meant to conceal deficiencies. They add a false note when so employed. Cover the ugly mantel if you can. Enclose it with pine boards, covered with some good tapestry of commerce. Then a mirror and shelf can be placed on it, the shelf adorned with candlesticks. When this has been done, choose your wall-paper.

Golden browns are particularly happy with oak wood-work. Green or yellow may be used; never red in stripes. Red stripes and oak belong to cheap country-clubs and seaside hotels. Manufactured tapestry, 'or tapestry papers, are excellent. Blue would be delightful were a sure, keen eye to guide one in selecting a tone. The impecunious

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amateur, inclined to a choice of blue on the walls of an oak-trimmed dining-room, is advised to feel a careful way among different tones and shades. When a well-known woman was quoted as the best-dressed person in town, a poor relation exclaimed, "That is because she never has to wear one of her failures." The amateur decorator, who cannot afford to discard failures, should be careful before deciding finally upon a blue for her walls.

When you have the privilege of painting or coloring your wood-work you have unlimited scope. One of the prettiest small apartment dining-rooms was treated in this manner. The wood-work and ceiling were white. A blue cotton-jean turned wrong side out to show the lighter tone, and put on with tacks, was used on the floor, for the walls, and in the curtains. White dotted muslin went next the panes. A white shelf running around the room some sixteen inches below the ceiling held a row of blue and white Canton china plates. Nothing but blue and white china was used on the table, or allowed in the room.



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White wood-work and ceiling, a paper covered with enormous poppies, a white shelf under the frieze for blue and white china, made of another small apartment-house dining-room an oasis in the hot and dusty town.

Although the dining-rooms of apartments may be built to correspond in size, and although every din-



Chippendale chair,
from
New England.
1788.

ing-room must be furnished with its tables and its chairs, no one room need look like another. In order to make this clear, illustrations have been given of two dining-rooms in the same apartment-house. The dimensions of the rooms are identical, except that the ceiling of one is higher than the other by some ten or twelve inches.

One of the dining-rooms, that with the corner cupboard, has white wood-work and ceiling. The dark red cartridge paper is finished at the ceiling by a white picture-moulding. The curtains of green net over white net are looped back over large brass disks.

The second dining-room has, like the parlor into which it opens, green wood-work and green burlaps. The ceiling is treated with the merest suggestion of green, and brought down to a shelf running round the room. The thick curtains are of green corduroy; those next the pane, of soft yellow silk over



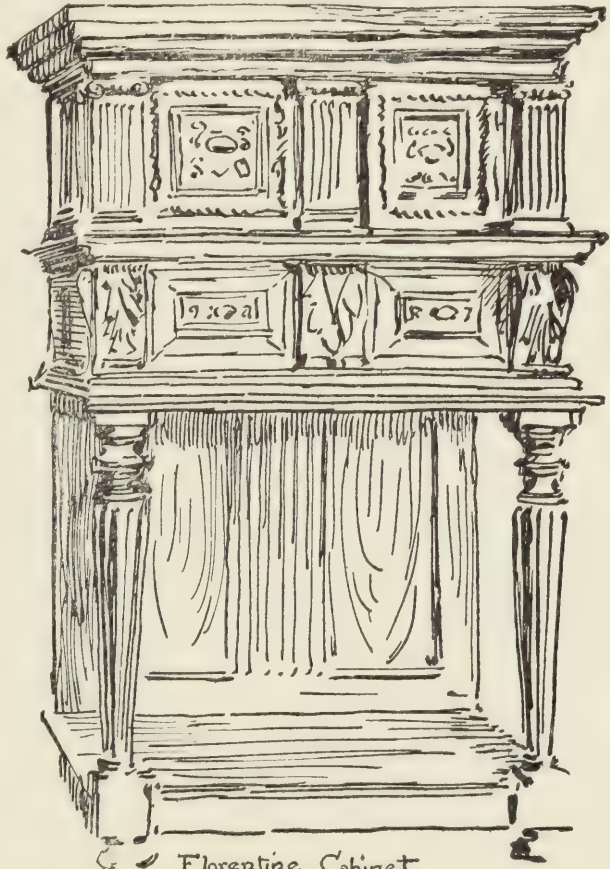
“THAT WITH THE CORNER CUPBOARD HAS WHITE WOODWORK”

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cream white muslin. The only china appearing from under cover is the blue and white.

To go from one of these dining-rooms to the other is like going into another town, proving that wall-spaces of identical dimensions need never entail the necessity of monotonous effects.

I remember another dining-room in an apartment-house, long since demolished, where the scheme of color ran to greens and pinks. The wood-work was the green of the mullein stalk, the walls of soft clover-pink cartridge paper, the ceiling plain and slightly tinted with pink. The table-service was of an old



Florentine Cabinet
of carved oak

green china that represented the heirlooms of several generations. The hangings were of denim, matching the wood-work.

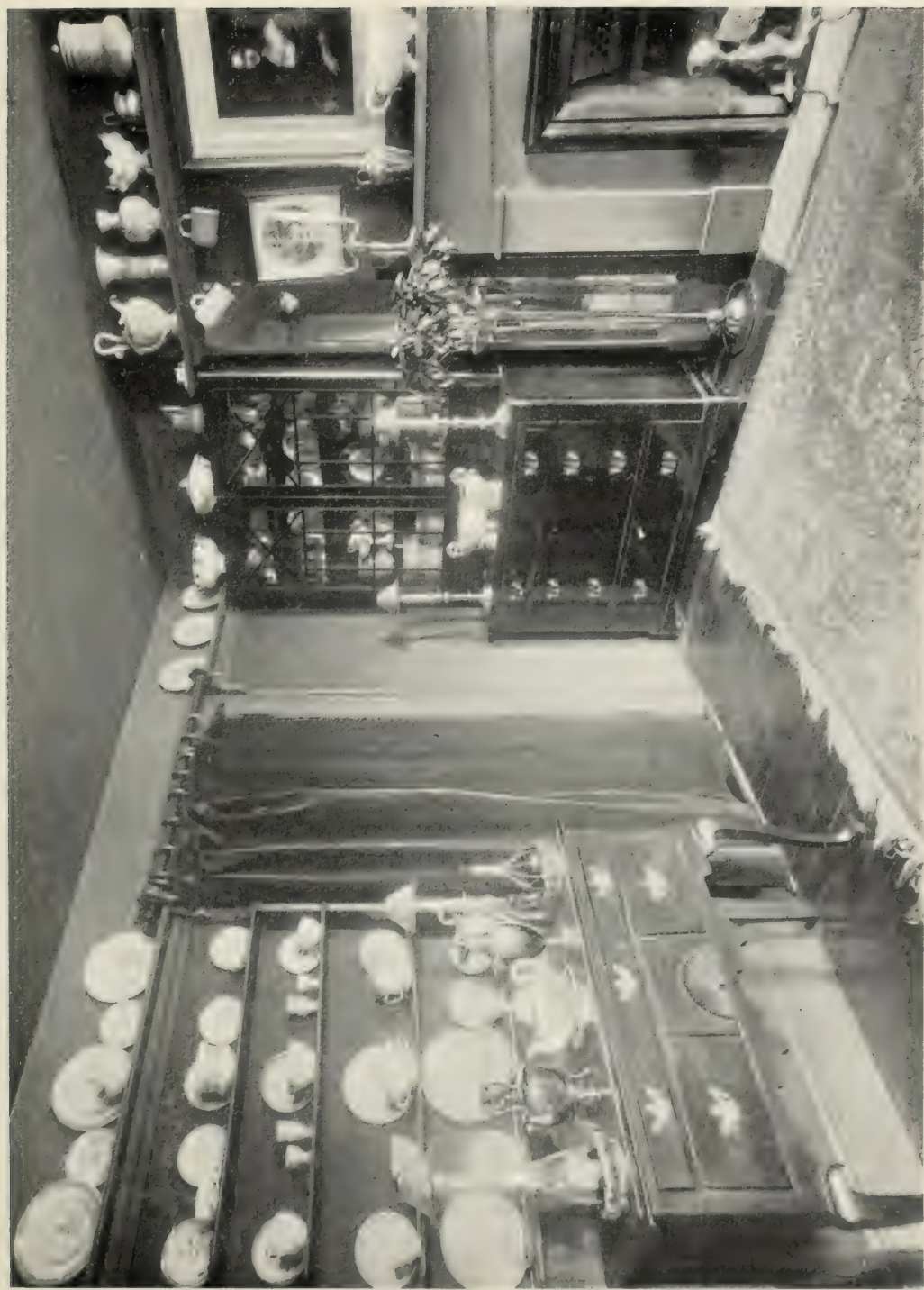
I know a dining-room in a studio-building that has its walls covered with a wainscoting of pine treated with oil until it looks like old oak. The

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frieze is dull green. Gay Dutch plates and pewter mugs are on the shelf. A Dutch clock hangs on the wall. I know another, also in a studio-building—a dining-room with a wainscoting of fine old carved wood, and walls covered with a burlaps treated with a dull gold wash. The ceilings are hung with brass Italian lamps, and one or two of old silver. All the furniture is richly carved dark oak.

Then there is another in which I once dined, high up in the tenth story of an apartment—a circular dining-room with classic white columns running round the room; the white stuccoed walls and ceiling covered with charming designs in arabesque and flying figures—its crowning glory the window opening on a wide stone balcony. I shall never forget my evening there, nor the luxury, in an unpicturesque city, of resting my empty coffee-cup on the stone balustrade of the balcony while the soft night air stirred the leaves of its vine. Stretched below me, in the darkness, with its myriads of street lamps shining through rising smoke and vapor, New York looked like a black sea into which the stars had fallen.

The articles necessary for a dining-room, the table and chairs, sideboard, side-table, and screen may be of the costliest and most elaborate character, or of the simplest. A screen used to conceal the pantry door through which the butler or waitress approaches the table will sometimes cost many thousands of dollars or may be had for a dollar



“THE ONLY CHINA APPEARING FROM UNDER COVER IS THE BLUE AND WHITE.”

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and a half. The uses of the screen are the same in both cases.

The most conspicuous, and, when beautiful, the most impressive piece of dining-room furniture, is the sideboard, and it should represent the most judicious selection. When well designed, it adds a never-failing dignity to the simplest room. Time lends it quality, and a careful choice in the beginning means the possession of an object which will form a permanent element of value in the ever-changing modern home. After the sideboard, come the chairs. They should have wide seats and high backs. If when the sideboard and the chairs are purchased the money is exhausted, a sorry comfort may be had in the thought that an ugly table can be concealed by a cloth.

In the furnishing of a dining-room as in the purchase of wall-papers a black-list is needed. At the head of this list should come the common oak sideboard of commerce, with a mirror over the top framed by tiers of upright shelves. Were these sideboards good in design, they might be painted, scraped, or stained; but the design is generally unpardonably bad. If a choice must lie between one of them or none — choose none. Send instead for the carpenter to



Type of chair very common in this country about 1800. Sheraton model, with turned legs and rounds. This is painted black; gilded and painted with gay flowers and scrolls Easthampton. L. I

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make what old-fashioned people called a cupboard, and what is now designated as a dresser. A cupboard, as I still like to call it, costing but five or six dollars, can be made in this way : four narrow pine shelves above, and three wider shelves below, supported by upright pieces at either end. The top of the wide shelf may be set with silver like a side-board. Paint or stain the shelves.

They may be curtained with the denim cretonne or flowered material that hangs at the windows. When finished, the result is by no means to be despised, and the exigencies of apartment life make it admissible. For it must never be forgotten that, in the very nature of things, life in an apartment necessitates many a makeshift. Until one rents for more than a house, sufficient closet room is not to be expected, nor wall-space for extra wardrobes and side-boards. Housekeeping resolves itself into a series of compromises. Sacrifices go endlessly on — to-day of a comfort for the sake of an appearance, to-morrow of an interesting effect to gain a greater moving space. Nothing for all our pains is quite as it would be in a house. Twice the intelligence is needed in arranging it — in knowing what to discard, and how to make a compulsory choice take on the air of an inspiration.

The curtained cupboard holding dishes would be out of the question in the dining-room of a town house, but I saw a little scrap of a dining-room in an apartment made quite lovely with one. The shelves were hung with blue cotton stamped in white, and

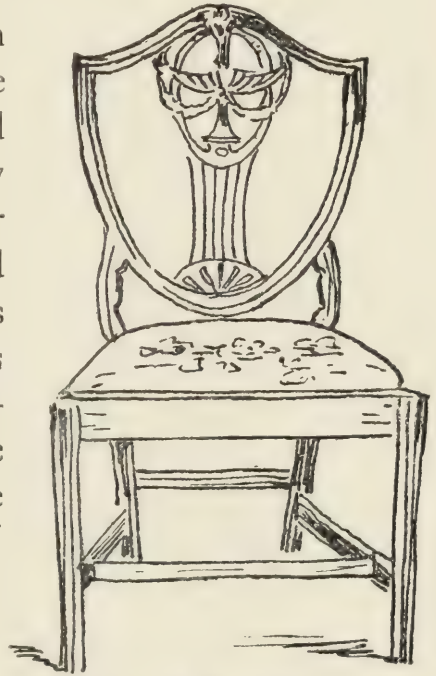
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set out with blue and white china. The room was so small that it could hold no other furniture except the table and chairs, and a tiny serving table in front of the windows. For all that, it bore about it an unmistakable air of refinement.

A little more money, and a little more trouble, and a more elaborate cupboard could be produced, — the lower shelves enclosed by doors having well-wrought iron hinges of brass or copper, as one prefers. These hinges should be made interesting, and follow old Dutch models. The upper shelves of the cupboard could be left open, or enclosed by glass doors, the lead of the glass showing the bull's-eye, repeating the design of that on the window-panes, or giving the names or the monograms of individuals so interwoven that their meaning would not be distinguishable at once. I saw the doors of a cupboard treated in this way in the lunch-room

of an architect's office. The name of the firm appeared in an elaborate design covering the glass of the long and narrow doors that protected from dust the table china and silver used at luncheon.

One of the illustrations shows a low-boy, with a series of shelves built over it. The top of the low-



Hepplewhite chair, made
in America.

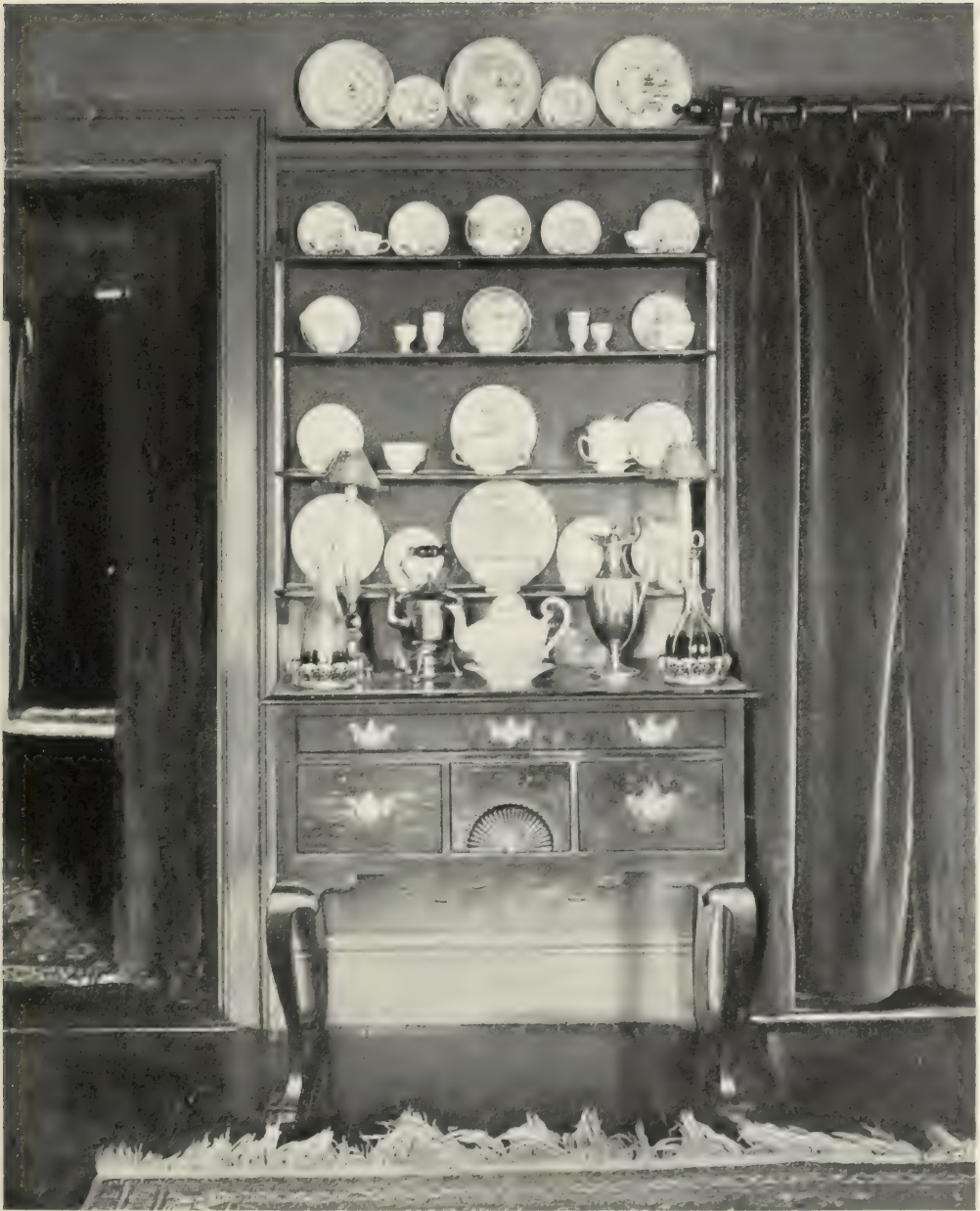
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boy is used as a sideboard, the drawers for holding small silver. This, too, is a makeshift, but has sufficient tact not to make itself obtrusive.

In an apartment dining-room, when a serving-table is an impossibility, one can be arranged for use while the family are at table. The services of the carpenter, that most helpful of appendages to a domestic establishment, must again be called into requisition. "Give me a carpenter," I heard a woman say once, "and I can furnish any house." And I never saw her quite so happy as when she had one at her beck and call for a day at a time. Such transformations as were accomplished under her directions! Such conveniences as appeared! Such utilizations of space no one else ever accomplished.

But to return to that substitute for the serving-table. By the dining-room door leading into the kitchen or pantry (if the apartment boasts a pantry), let your handy man put up a hinged shelf behind the screen. Support it with a leg underneath, to be slipped back when the shelf is not in use, enabling it to fall flat against the wall. A white tablecloth must always be used on a serving-table.

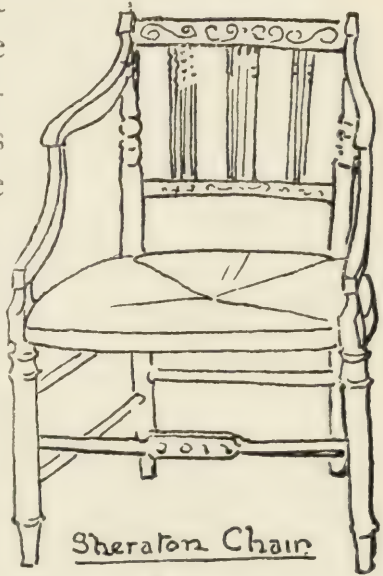
Dining-rooms, in unpretentious country houses, may be treated with much of the informality proper to the apartment. They may have flowered papers, chintz, or cretonne hangings, and when mahogany is impossible, cupboards instead of sideboards. Indeed, it is the aim of many householders, when in the country, to preserve simplicity and informality, and whenever this is done, with a well-



“THE TOP OF THE LOW-BOY IS USED AS A SIDEBOARD”

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defined and well-expressed purpose, a stamp of authority is immediately given to an environment. Simplicity is a standard by which all excellence must ultimately be measured. But this simplicity does not mean the cheap, nor the ungainly, nor the awkward, nor the ugly. It may be purchased at great cost. It must be acquired by temperance in judgment, and a sure knowledge of requirements. It makes itself felt in all the arts; in the building of the most sumptuous houses, and in the furnishing of the very humblest. An elaboration of detail does not disturb the general design. Thus a woman's summer toilet may be praised for its perfect simplicity, yet the needlework, the embroidery, the inlay of lace, may be of the finest, the costliest, the most intricate character. On the



Sheraton Chair

Painted black, with decorations of scrolls, colored and gilded - American, about 1810.

other hand a cheap calico may be over-ruffled and over-trimmed, set off with so many ribbons and buckles that it could only be counted pretentious and vulgar, and this, although the cost of the entire calico dress might not have equalled that of one yard of the lace on the dress which had been extolled for its simplicity. The question of cost, therefore, does not enter into the subject. A knowledge of essentials does, which includes a

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knowledge of what should be kept out of the room. Who, for instance, would tolerate a dining-room chair trimmed with bows of ribbon, or so much as an inch of ribbon on the sideboard cover? I wish that dining-rooms might be freed of baby-carriages and sewing-machines. When I say this I do not mean any criticism of difficult conditions. Where necessity rules, criticism is unjust, but in many houses the proprieties are violated by people who disregard everything but that which is convenient. Children's books, perambulators, a mother's work-basket, are not only pardonable in a dining-room, but quite admissible and interesting at times, when it is easily apparent that the rest of the house is too small to contain them. *Just as* ✓

I speak with a certain feeling of these different conditions, remembering as I do a whole row of houses put up in a college town, houses too fine for the professors or even for the president himself. Each dining-room had a bay-window. In almost every window the passers-by could see a sewing machine. In the morning the sewing machine was presided over by the woman of the house; in the afternoon it was closed and shoved against the sash, the mother having joined her husband on the front steps or in a rocker on the porch, while the children romped in the grass plot or on the pavements. A life like this represents no ideal of simplicity. It merely betrays an absence of all sense of the fitness of things, and an absence, too, of all feeling for the social graces. With so large

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and so expensive a house, why not a sewing-room upstairs? None of the professors, small and unpretentious as their houses were, kept sewing machines in the dining-room: certainly not the president, who could never have afforded one of these costly domiciles. Such facts as these are too often forgotten in the criticisms which one class of society makes of another, and in the discontent so often expressed by people of newly acquired wealth to whom social recognition, by poorer people, is denied. A dining-room in a country house may have white enamelled wood-work rich in Colonial detail, a lovely flowered paper, ruffled muslin curtains, and genuine mahogany furniture costing more than the entire furniture of some houses, and still convince you by the objects on the mantel and sideboard that the aim of the mistress has been to preserve great simplicity. Or it may have wood-work of yellow pine, cheap muslin hangings at the windows; chairs of common wood painted white; and yet by a touch or two, the introduction of flowers and well-chosen china, assume both charm and importance.

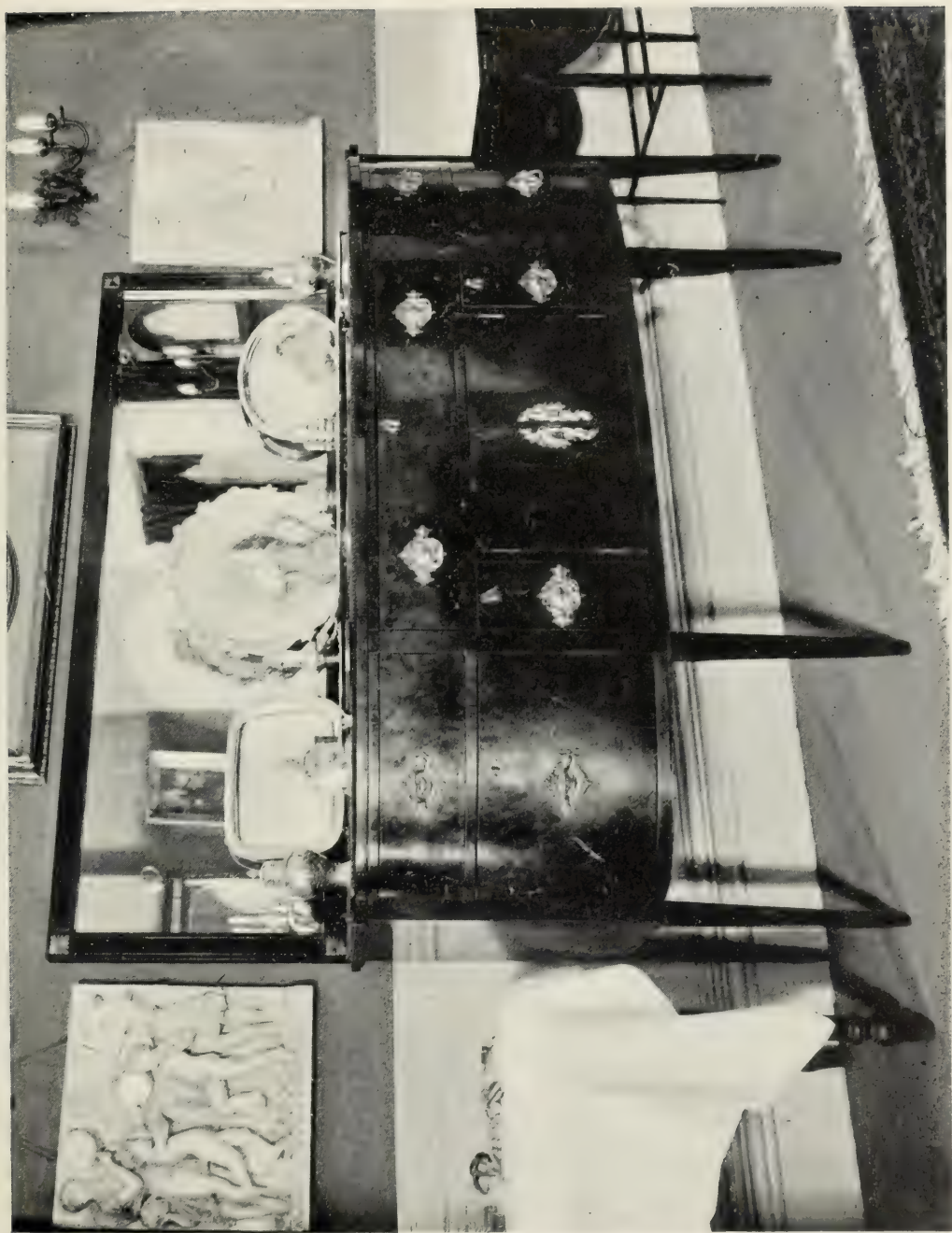
About seven miles out of Palma on the Island of Majorca there is a fascinating country house owned by the Count of Montenegro to which he pays occasional visits. His dining-room, a yellow and blue room, was made lovely with a wood that I think must have been olive, it was so like the little boxes sold in Sorrento, burlaps, and blue and white Majolica. The heavy ceiling beams were of this

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yellow wood inlaid with great plates of genuine blue and white Majolica. The walls and high-backed olive-wood chairs were covered with undyed burlaps. The blue on the chairs appeared in coats of arms done in blue and white cotton and placed in the left-hand upper corner of each chair. An alcove at one end of the room was entirely filled with a glass-enclosed cupboard filled with the rarest specimens of blue and white Majolica.

When the country house is used for entertaining on an elaborate scale, when it represents nothing more, in fact, than a transfer of social obligations from a town house to one by the ocean or in the Highlands, the dining-room must be treated with a greater consideration. The informality and make-shifts can have no place in it. Indeed, when one ascends in the scale of sumptuous living, town and country-house dining-rooms differ but little. Nobody in town wants stuffy hangings in a dining-room. They are quite as objectionable in the country. Wood is used on the walls in either place, so are marbles and costly tapestries. The room is made to stand for itself, to suggest in every detail the fact that it has been made to dine in; that it is not an ordinary chamber transformed into an eating place by the presence of some chairs, a table, and a sideboard.

The back parlors of ordinary city houses are not necessarily dining-rooms—a chair, a desk, and a case for instruments, and the office of a doctor or a dentist appears; a few book-shelves and wide



“THE SIDEBOARD STANDS IN A CONVENTIONAL TOWN HOUSE DINING-ROOM”

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table and lamps, and we have a reading-room. At the same time these rooms may be made into lovely dining-rooms; but they must be treated with dignity.

The sideboard shown in one of the illustrations stands in a conventional town-house dining-room. A burlaps of exquisite apple-green hue covers the wall. The wood-work is white. The curtains are of fine green corduroy with silvery lights. The effect is cool and refreshing. A dinner in this room is a delight. Candles are used everywhere, on the table, the sideboard, and mantel; none of the oxygen in the air is consumed by gas.

In another dining-room with white wood-work and green walls, the hangings are of rose silk looped over brass rods. The rods, imitating an old fashion of a half-century ago, are huge gilt arrows, good in design because simple.

No lover of color will be content unless a dining-room is arranged so that every detail of light and color is made harmonious. This, of course, can only be accomplished after much study. An interesting example of what has been done is found in a dining-room of a town house, modelled, in the beginning, along purely conventional lines, its front and back parlor divided by folding doors. The room has a ceiling eleven and a half feet high. The dado, six feet in height, is a Japanese leather paper of dull mahogany red, finished by a shelf on which are placed bits of pottery and old tankards. From this shelf to the picture-moulding there is another

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Japanese paper, four feet wide, showing the mahogany and gold tones of Spanish leather. The frieze and ceiling are tinted with bronze gold. The woodwork is of cherry polished and darkened to a dull tone. The furniture is mahogany. The colored pictures are framed in gold; etchings in mahogany. None have white mats. All the lights are shaded with ruby glass, the gas never being turned above a point. From the four corners of the ceiling Venetian brass altar-lamps are suspended, the tapers hidden in ruby cups. The floor is covered with a dull red carpet, having a small design repeating the wall color. Hangings and chair covers are of dull red plush. A wistaria vine has been trained over an arbor that shades the dining-room window. The light through its leaves fills the room with a cool, yellow-green tone, and relieves it of all feeling of oppression when the heat of summer begins.

A gaily flowered paper is an impossibility in the dining-rooms of town houses, admissible as it may be in an apartment. Dark papers are restful but cannot give richness.

When French walnut is used to finish one of these conventional rooms, a high wainscoting, with Spanish leather above, makes a room of great dignity and repose. I know one instance in which the wood panelling for the walls was imported directly from Italy, and put up in an ordinary city dining-room. The window, thrown out as a big bay, was filled with leaded glass of charming rest-

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ful tones. Of course no color appeared on the walls; even the covers of the low window-seats were subdued in tone. The treatment of the window was especially delightful, and its fashion a good one to follow.

In many cases a dining-room with panelled walls is quite destroyed by the introduction of ordinary window-frames with ordinary panes of glass, — panes of glass which in town must, of course, be curtained for privacy. When stained glass is out of the question, leaded panes, semi-clear, give a sense of seclusion. When following good designs, the leaded window helps to give the panelled room the air of a symmetrical composition. Ordinary window glass robs the room of elegance.

In a dining-room panelled with polished walnut the frieze is sometimes painted in rich, dull tones, after Venetian models, sometimes treated with plaster in low relief, or with leather. Thus one dining-room has mahogany wainscoting, the frieze above filled with a fine French cretonne chosen for its color and design, the nature of the material not being distinguishable at the height at which it appears. Green velvet brocade, repeating the tones of the stems in the flowered cretonne and broken by yellow, appear in the curtains and on the chairs. Chippendale mahogany furniture is used.

Another dining-room is of old black-oak, the frieze of green tapestry. Green tapestry is used on the tall, black-oak dining chairs. All the fur-

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niture is Italian. A carved sideboard of much beauty, picked up in Venice, was the centre round which the room was fashioned.

With the gray-green of chestnut, the greens of plants will be found to blend in the happiest harmony, the plants to appear in pots, or perhaps in a lovely old stained marble fountain with a circular basin on its slim pedestal. Sometimes, when a room is large, a Byzantine temple of white marble inlaid with mosaics is introduced in a corner and kept filled with growing maidenhair ferns, freshened by the constant spray of tiny water-spouts.

One dining-room floor is made of oak with a marble border, an importation from Italy. The arch of the window is supported by rare marble columns, of seven tones, with great gilt capitals, brown Sicily, that rich and marvellous storehouse of art treasures. The ceiling and deep frieze, in Italian renaissance, show a blue ground with an arabesque of gold in high relief. The door is an old church altar, also blue and gold, the gold in high relief on the blue. The finest old tapestry covers the walls.

All of these more elaborate dining-rooms have been carefully studied by skilled designers; the objects placed in them have been secured only after many excursions through old palaces of Europe. They are beyond the reach of the ordinary mortal, and their imitations in cheaper materials would be absolutely unpardonable. Imitations, by the way,

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are always dangerous. They do incalculable harm in blinding us to the virtues of the genuine article, and in creating a disgust for the good thing, which we know only through some spurious example. We react from gilt chairs because we have never seen really fine gilt chairs in appropriate places, — only bad imitations placed in surroundings where they never belong.

In large houses, the elaborately designed dining-room is only used for the mid-day or evening meal. Small breakfast-rooms are provided upstairs, or in another part of the house, where an informal meal, like breakfast, can be taken in quiet, with simply a maid in attendance.

Except in the very old town houses, rapidly disappearing in New York, — one seldom sees the pretty china closets of an earlier era. Mahogany cabinets with glass doors have been made to take their places, or the old-fashioned mahogany corner-cabinet. Yet these old china closets built into the wall were worthy of preservation. They are often repeated in town houses to-day, are appropriate almost anywhere, and add immensely to simple and conventional interiors. Wood, repeating a conventional design, is sometimes used to enclose the small panes. Lead is often employed. These closets appear over the mantel, at its side, or in the corners of the room, sometimes completely filling one end of it. The finest of china alone is kept in them.

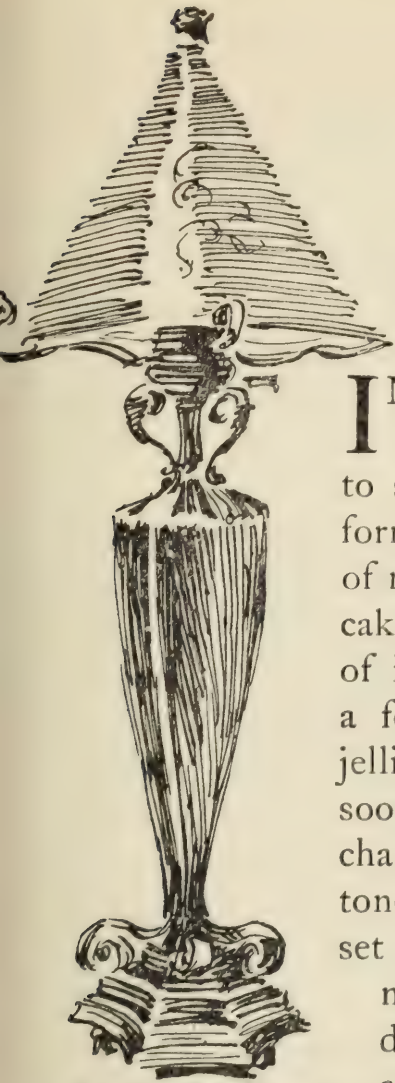
The dining-room floor should be bare, except

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for the rug under the dining table. This should always be large enough to surround the chairs about the table; never so thick that its nap will catch the chair legs, and never so thin that it will wrinkle when a chair is moved.



Drop light over
Dining Table
Wrought iron and
leaded glass in green and blue —



An English Lamp.

CHAPTER X

THE DINING-ROOM : THE DECORATION OF THE TABLE

IN the sixties and early seventies of the last century, it was proper to set a dinner-table with wonderful forms in sugars and sweets, pyramids of nougat and candied oranges ; little cakes surmounted by animals made of icing ; fruits and jellies that were a feast to the eye. I miss those jellies even to this day, — “jellies soother than the creamy curd,” charming in color, transparent in tone. The slightest jar to the table set them quivering. To-day we

never see a jelly arranged on the dinner-table, and seldom a jelly at all, unless it be in occasional houses with traditions of a long ago ; or, abomination of abominations, unless it be a lemon jelly without flavor — no touch of sherry or brandy — served in oranges scooped out and made ready to receive it. We have of course the currant and cranberry jelly, brought in with certain meats and poultry, but we get only a glimpse

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of these as they are handed about by the butler. They are not the jellies that I remember.

That other fashion, too, of removing the white cover and leaving the table bare for the nuts and the wines has long since become extinct — the fashion which gave its name to the silver coaster or holder in which the decanter of port or Madeira was set, and which was moved about among the guests at the table, “coasting” its edges, the thick green baize on its base preventing the scratching of the highly polished mahogany.

Not one of these old customs or fashions survives. Our dinner-tables are never dismantled until the last guest has departed and the doors of the drawing-room are closed. The dinner and luncheon tables of the day all follow a form of decoration more or less rigid, and removed as far as possible from the bounteous methods of our forefathers. No vegetables appear on them; no entrées, no made dessert. The jardinière of growing ferns has in many houses given way to a silver pitcher resting on a silver tray provided with very low legs. Sometimes this pitcher, which must always be good in form and workmanship, is filled with flowers. Nobody makes any demur if it be empty. About it, on the table, are laid some spoons of interesting or unique design, the little dishes for the sweets, the candied nuts, and fruits. At dinner there are always the candlesticks. When a man likes the sentiment of carving for those about his board, he does it at the table. When he is disinclined to perform the service, the waitress or

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the butler carves at the side-table always at formal dinners.

These more or less rigid forms of lay-out, however, merely represent foundations upon which certain other forms of decoration can be built, decorations which must vary with place and circumstance and always with the season. Flowers and fruits



appear. Blendings and effects of color are studied, compositions in which the flowers and the candle-shades are considered together, or the fruits and the vessels which contain the flowers. The idea is, whether the table be set for luncheon or dinner, to provide a central point of interest. Sometimes it is the silver pitcher to which reference has just been

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made ; sometimes it is simply a glass vase or a bit of good pottery with flowers.

When a dinner for twenty people or more is to be elaborate in character, preparations of a more splendid order are made. The centre of the table will then be transformed into a pool of water, with a tiny fountain playing over aquatic plants, the pool being circled by banks of violets and lilies of the valley. Sometimes, too, the whole room will be embowered with flowers, arched like an arbor over the table itself, roses, blossoms down, hanging from the trellis, like bunches of grapes from the vine. Or the centre of the table may be filled with masses of pink roses, encircled with maidenhair ferns. The mirrors about the room will then be trimmed with curtains of smilax, parted in the middle and looped back over brass disks, while wreaths of pink orchids are made to fall from the centres of the rod and over the mirrors.

Fruits and flowers out of season — and to be valued by certain people they must always be out of season — will appear in town during the winter and in Newport during the summer. But these represent forms of entertaining and of decorating which the majority of us need never attempt to emulate. They lie beyond our reach.

Our concern is with the table to which a family has all its life accustomed itself, which it sets with greater elaboration for its guests, but without departing from certain established ways of placing knives and forks, providing finger-bowls, and cut-

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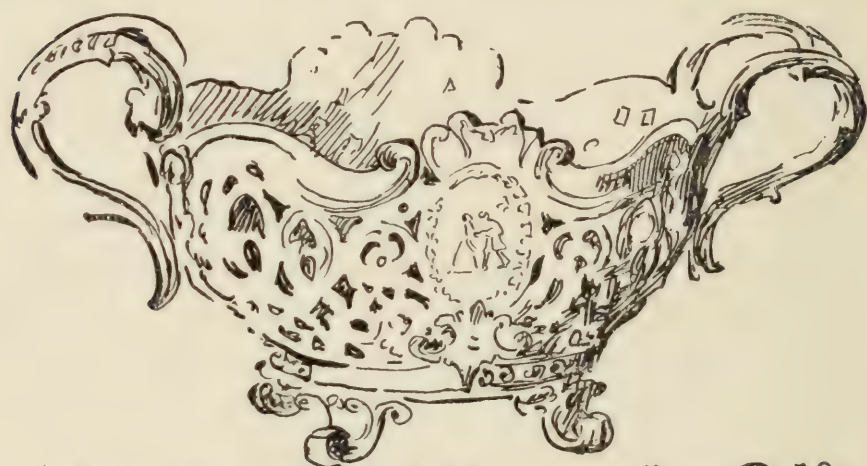
ting the bread. Such a table should be always immaculate and always pretty.

Respect for environment has always a fascinating element in it for me. I have a certain enthusiasm for a woman who can pay for all the roses she wants to import from a town, and yet who prefers to supply her country-house table with flowers from her own garden; who will use sweet-peas in their season, asters in the fall, or the common ground-pine when her garden has succumbed to autumn frosts. And I feel, too, that that other woman was possessed of a certain genius who discovered that the silvery mullein stalk, freshly covered with dew-drops, when placed in a silver bowl filled with cold water that covered it with frost, was the most exquisite of table decorations for an early breakfast in summer. Then the woman who first used the exquisite white blossom of the despised white carrot, surrounding it with a mass of maidenhair fern,—we all owe her a debt for her inspiration!

I like respect paid to the seasons,—the first jonquils brought into service for spring luncheons, the first hyacinths, the first fragrant white lilacs; above all, the first sweet-smelling pineapple. A pineapple can be filled with a fruit salad or strawberries. The top, with its stiff plumes of green leaves, may be lifted like a lid when the berries or the fruit salad buried inside are to be served. No aroma is so subtle, so pervasive, so exquisite. It suggests coolness and freshness, and when, during the late spring or early summer in town, the heat has begun to pall,

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it is the most delightful of fruits, for its perfume alone: I like to buy an over-ripe pineapple, cut it up, and place it on saucers in out-of-the-way places around the room, merely for the sake of the fragrance. To my mind, no decoration in a dining-room — none at least associated with a household feast or festivity — can leave out the element of perfume or aroma. The smell of the evergreens — that pungent, exquisite odor of hemlock half dried



Large fruit dish of blue and white Delft.

and unduly heated — belongs distinctively to the Christmas season. We all know what the perfume of roses does for a dining-room, or that of peaches, nectarines, and raspberries.

From childhood I still carry the remembrance of the perfume of heliotrope on a hot day in a dining-room on the Hudson. The room I entered, after a scorching drive over a long sunny road, was made cool by vines and awnings at the window, and

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by a huge lump of ice placed in the centre of the luncheon-table and cut, after a fashion no longer existing among us, with a round hole in the middle to hold a mass of heliotrope. The flower has suggested to me ever since refreshing coolness.

The passion-flower, when cut from its stem, turned face up and laid about on the table, is a fashion as pretty as that once prevailing in the South, when pink damask roses without stems were scattered over the cloth. To-day violets are used in the same way, both for luncheons and for dinners — a bank of them in the centre of the table, and handfuls scattered over the cloth. The candles for the dinner-table are then either left without shades, which many people prefer, or show violets in some form. When one can afford to use orchids in the centre of the table, scattered over the cloth or laid like strands of ribbon from the centrepiece to each plate, one attains a surpassing excellence.

When all else fails, the scattering of ferns over a table is not to be despised. In the autumn the scarlet Virginia creeper is most beautiful used in this way, so is the vine of the blackberry — a bowl in the middle of the table and some tendrils laid on the cover. In the autumn, too, grapes are fascinating as a decoration, arranged in a dish with leaves, some of the bunches falling over the edges of the dish. It is no unusual thing to see fruits laid about on the table, as flowers are laid, but one must have a sure touch and not leave the decorations to the butler.

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A dinner-table in late February, when each guest in a town house has begun to long for spring, is made delightful with yellow jonquils in a light, highly polished copper jar, especially when four brass candelabra are placed about them and the candles are left without shades. Pink roses have a quality that satisfies, whatever the season. White roses with maidenhair fern are beautiful in silver or glass. The white tulip has a never-failing loveliness, always enhanced when the delicate pink of its lining is visible.

When spring has come a luncheon-table may be made lovely with the blossoms and leaves of the wistaria in a basket of wood-green straw placed in the centre of the table, the handles tied with a wide satin ribbon exactly matching the blossoms. A dinner-table, when the nights are hot in town, may be made an unforgettable picture by the pink and white blossoms of the quince or the apple-tree, in a high vase in the middle of the table, the branches spreading. About the table in low glass bowls bunches of the white lilac must then be arranged. The light should fall from overhead through the pink and white blossoms.

Although silver pitchers, vases, and quaint urns have become fashionable for flowers in the middle of a table, men with highly developed æsthetic senses decry the use of silver with flowers. "You would not be guilty of such a thing, would you?" one of these men asked me — a very old man, with traditions of bygone days — an old man who loves

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flowers as some of us love people. He will bring me a single blossom from his garden, and I feel when I receive it as though one of his children had been confided to my care. He thinks nothing but pottery or glass proper for them, a bit of crystal, or a Venetian vase. We both agree on one point, he and I, when we are discussing these questions, — that nothing is really prettier, particularly in the centre of a table, than a round, perfectly clear fish-bowl (one may be had for fifty cents). The stems of the flowers are then visible, and the lights reflected in the water in a way we both find entrancing. He drew my attention to another point in favor of these fish bowls, — that they are low enough not to interrupt the gaze across the table; for at many luncheons and dinners, because of the floral decorations between, it is impossible to exchange a word with one's opposite neighbor. "Conversation is a sauce," he will say to me. "A dinner lacks flavor without it. If we are summoned to a man's board only to be fed and then sent away, we might as well have a series of stalls arranged, and guests driven in them, two by two."

I have one friend who possesses a tall, exquisite, and perfectly plain crystal pitcher of beautiful classic proportions, which she uses in the centre of her table, often with the purple iris of summer. Nothing can exceed its beauty. Though I have lunched with her again and again, I can never remember anything she has given me to eat, but I am always bewitched anew with the beauty of that simple crystal

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pitcher, holding its half a dozen long-stemmed blossoms.

While still on the subject of glass vases, it may be as well to say, that many most excellent examples, costing not more than ten cents, are to be found everywhere; they are good in form, simple in detail, and excellent for country houses where flowers abound. Of course the moment that these vases appear with painted decorations, or that they are in any way colored, that moment their value is destroyed.

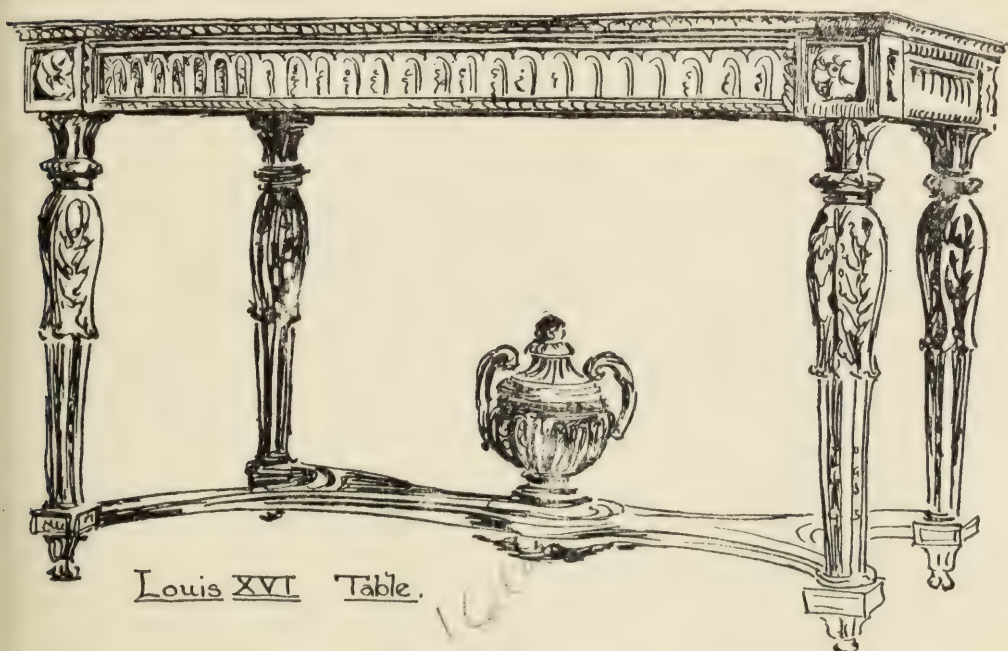
Just here, too, I would like to say, that in this day of great profusion, it always adds a note of elegance to separate flowers, and to have one or two appear by themselves on a table, — a single rose or a lily in a long-stemmed glass, — not only because a single flower being beautiful is worthy of contemplation, but because good taste proclaims against too indiscriminate a massing of beautiful things, unless the production of sumptuous effects is the object, and one wants masses of flowers for the sake of their color. I remember a single orchid at the table of a friend which gave me a pleasure delightful to recall, even after many years. The orchid, full of green and yellow tones, was placed with a spray of maidenhair fern in a slender glass of Venice, full of softest yellows and greens.

For “the fun of the thing,” as children say, — for the sentiment of it, as older persons put it, — tables may, on gala days, be arranged with special outfits and souvenirs, the insignia of championship in golf

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or tennis ; with candied ships on yachting days, or with whatever the pleasure and excitement of the moment suggest. The occasion makes the justification, but the occasion must not be prolonged, else, like a diet of highly seasoned sauces, it ends by destroying the appetite.

A Thanksgiving dinner-table can, in its outlay, express a lavishness not proper to the conventional



dinners of other seasons, for a Thanksgiving lavishness is the order of the day. Everything expressing richness, fulness, and bounty belong to it. Nature has then yielded her fruits, and man has reaped the harvest, and a time of universal rejoicing follows ; of exultation, of returning thanks ; of making merry over benefits received. Everything is gathered to-

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gether at that time, the stores of field and forest; the children and grandchildren of scattered sons and daughters. A cornucopia suggests the bounty of the day. It may be made of cardboard or wire, and covered with leaves. From the mouth of the horn, bunches of grapes, red-cheeked apples, pears, nuts, and oranges fall over the cloth. The colors, when studied, are enchanting. A pumpkin may take the place of the cornucopia. It must be scooped out, and filled with all the fruits and nuts of the season, with grapes especially, those of purple tones blending charmingly with it; some of the bunches falling over the edge, lie on the cloth. The brilliant leaves of the blackberry vine, which are scarlet at that time of the year, are fascinating when made to run from the pumpkin to each plate. I have seen artists spend an hour over the composition, choosing the fruits as they would the colors for a canvas. The effect, when finished, was almost that of a Paul Veronese in color, and like all color, impossible to describe.

When the Thanksgiving dinner is at night, the candle-shades are trimmed with autumn leaves. The light of gas or electricity, unless shaded, will mar the best of compositions.

At Christmas, as the desire should be to express less of exultation in the gifts received than of joy in bestowing, everything should express light and radiance, all the out-going qualities. The windows should express it, the fireside, the halls, the table.

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By common consent — that common consent which results from an instinctive recognition of the fact that those things which nature yields at Christmas are those best adapted to the celebration of the day — by common consent, then, evergreens are universally used for Christmas, — the hemlock, the holly, the mistletoe, the pine, and the laurel. Happily they come within reach of the poor.

I have known many beautiful Christmas dinner-tables, some that have seated twenty or more guests, and been set out with family plate representing heirlooms of several generations ; tables that have been decorated with a profusion of flowers fresh from country greenhouses and exquisite in their loveliness. And I have been at dinners when merry-making prevailed, and the centre of the table was adorned with a small Nuremberg Christmas-tree lighted with candles, hung with tiny toys, and surrounded by the faces of happy children. I have been at many, as I said ; but for charm, and beauty, and radiance, I have never known one to exceed in loveliness a bare mahogany table trimmed with nothing but holly berries and leaves.

The round table, at which seats for ten were laid, was highly polished, so that it shone like the glass and crystal with which it was set. All the lights in the room were turned down except that of the circular drop-light from the chandelier shaded in red and brought to within a few inches of the tops of the candles. The red shades of the candles were decorated with holly. A wreath of red holly was placed

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in the centre of the table round the fruit. Bunches of holly were scattered about the table and tucked into each napkin. The bon-bons imitated the berry. I am quite sure that a white cloth would have robbed the table of its charm, been distracting, and quite destroyed the impression of a general glitter and sparkle. A long narrow table, seating twenty, would have had to be carefully studied before the cloth was omitted. Any bare table, before all else, would have had to be like this one, — highly polished.

A small Nuremberg Christmas-tree like that of which I have spoken is a household possession. Its branches are made of wire covered with green, and it stands in a wooden pot. For sick children in a nursery, or for old spinsters without children, one of these trees is a delight. I have a friend who for years has carried one about. Once it went across the ocean to be lighted in the Bay of Gibraltar at Christmas. She brings it out year after year, bending its branches into shape, lighting its twenty tiny candles, and gathering young and old about it.

The little tree measures from the bottom of its wooden pot to the top of its highest candle only three feet, and was the gift of a friend, who trimmed it with every kind of tiny toy, with miniature dolls, a Kriss Kringle, and its twenty candles. When lighted it is a blaze of cheerful glory, and it has now gathered to itself the association and traditions of many years, which no real tree, faded with a season's service, could have boasted. Of course, on general principles, live

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things are best, and when a forest tree is possible it ought to be had. On the other hand, there are people who prefer the tiny trees, and again there are others who, unless they had the little Nuremberg toy, would never know the joy of Christmas.

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CHAPTER XI

THE DINING-ROOM: THE APPOINTMENTS OF THE TABLE

THE bride-to-be asks again and again: "What shall I buy for my table?" forgetting how much will depend upon her place in the world and the amount of entertaining required of her. The extent of her purchases must vary with her circumstances, but in no condition of life, if a table is to be properly set, can she neglect certain fundamentals. There must be napkins, china, silver, and glass. There should be candlesticks and flowers. The candlesticks and flowers are quite as important as the tumblers. A table which has four lighted candles round a bunch of pink roses, polished silver and glass by each plate, with no other furnishing than pretty saltcellars and pepper pots, is a table to which any one may be invited. Splendor may be added by richer and more numerous appointments, but refinement is not dependent upon any additions that mere wealth may make.

For the convenience of the perplexed, then, a list of articles for the table is submitted. The list is subject to amplifications. The size of the family, or the number of guests a dining-room will hold, must govern the number of articles to be purchased.

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Tablecloths for breakfast, luncheon, and dinner. Many persons, possessing valuable specimens of old oak, will never at home dine except on a bare table. Bare mahogany, too, is always in order for luncheons and "high teas," but most of the world inclines to the tablecloth. In camps and simple cottages, a blue cotton, or linen stamped in white, is used for luncheon, a piece of embroidered white linen in the centre of the table under a bowl of flowers; but the best tablecloths are invariably white. They are never sold by the yard, being specially woven in different sizes, so that the top of the table, when set, shows a design covering most of the surface. When marked with monograms or ciphers (never initials) the lettering appears in white at either side of the centre. The letters are from two to three or more inches in height. A cloth finely fringed adds to the air of a table, a coarse fringe only destroys it. Better effects are obtained with a heavy lace insertion separated from the lace border by a band of linen. A greater elaboration carries one into cloths made with a centre of heavy church, or Italian, lace, then a band of linen falling well over the edge of the table, finished with a deep edge of lace like that of the centre. A cloth like this is of course reserved for special luncheons and dinners. Nothing, however, can quite take the place of a fine damask linen cloth for the dinner-table.

Napkins for breakfast, luncheon, and dinner are of different sizes, the largest being reserved for dinner, and to be marked with a monogram in the centre. The breakfast napkins may be marked with initials just above the hem, in the middle. Lace like that on the tablecloth trims the napkins belonging to certain sets, but the inexperienced are safer when not venturing among these elaborations.

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Plain fine linen damasks are always in order, whatever the occasion. No mistakes can be made in buying them, but whenever lace and embroidery become fashionable in the more elaborate sorts, imitations quickly follow.

Fringed tea-napkins. These can be laid on small trays when glasses of water are handed.

Doilies of drawn-work, lace, or embroidery.

A few centrepieces to be used on occasion. I say "occasion," because the fashion is ever changing. A few years since one saw pieces of costly lace, velvet, and satin on dinner-tables. Now the reaction has carried us back to white tablecloths with their woven patterns in damask. On the luncheon-table a square of old church lace is often used on the bare board.

Covers for tea and breakfast trays. A folded napkin is always proper on a tray, but some of the drawn or embroidered linens are prettier. They must be easily washed to be durable.

Linen or embroidered cover for the tea-table. The tea-table must, like the dinner-table, be arranged only when it is to be used, never left standing with tea-cups in a parlor from day to day.

Sideboard covers. Embroidered or drawn linen has the stamp of general approval. Fluffy lace is never admissible, neither are dotted muslin or linen cambrics. Ribbons are unheard of. I wish that I could say as much for the red-bordered napkin and cloth seen on sideboards in country places.

Asbestos mats covered with Canton flannel and overlaid with doilies, to be placed under hot plates when a table is bare.

A piece of thick Canton flannel, or the regular table felt, to place under the tablecloth.

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Candlesticks or candelabra for the table of silver, gold, delft, quaint china, glass, or brass, according to the tastes and the circumstances of the householder, but the cheaper the candlestick, the simpler and more unpretentious must be its form. Solid silver and gold candlesticks are often finished with elaborate designs in high relief. China, when it is the product of a famous manufactory, like Sevres, Dresden, Majolica, represents a distinct creation and stands for itself, so that the question of simplicity or elaboration of design does not enter in; but it does enter in when both the material and the design are cheap and yet are made ornate. The conventional candle-shade of to-day is of perforated or cut silver put on over a colored silk under-shade with a plain silk fringe to match. The colored under-shades can be changed when pink, yellow, or white flowers are used in decorating the table.

A tea-set. When this is not a wedding present and must be purchased, care should be expended in its selection. A tea-set is a daily companion: like other household possessions, it helps educate our children in taste and in manners. It becomes an heirloom, the pride of generations. Inartistic and tawdry styles should be avoided; old models should be studied for proportion. The beautiful old Sheffield plate is, when genuine, practically beyond the reach of most purchasers; but there are articles of plated-ware manufactured by well-known silversmiths which are excellent. But until a study of good examples has been made, one cannot properly judge modern manufactures.

When silver in any form is impossible and china must be chosen, the Japanese and Chinese wares will be found cheap and most satisfactory. The blue and white Canton now sold is always good form: Old Canton

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

is only found among collectors. Nankin china is more interesting but more costly. Cantigalli tea-sets are good; Dresden and Copenhagen most certainly are, but their cost very nearly equals that of good plated silver. There are, of course, as we all know, rare and costly china tea-sets to be hidden behind glass, and used only on occasions; sets of exquisite fine porcelain, beautiful in color and in form, which collectors might envy; but unless they have been inherited, no person of limited means need hope to possess them.

A small silver or small china tea-set to be used on the breakfast tray that is carried upstairs. When it is possible, a tray specially appointed and dainty with porcelain should be provided for the invalid. Such a tray, with all its pretty service, by the way, makes a charming Christmas or birthday present for some one shut up in a sick-room.

“Small silver,” — breakfast, dinner, dessert, and fish forks; tea, soup, desserts, and fruit spoons; ladles of different sizes, and fancy spoons for various uses.

Plates of every kind, description, and size — small bread-and-butter plates matching the breakfast and luncheon plates; soup plates matching the dinner plates; salad plates, dessert plates, large dinner plates. Blue and white Canton china will prove a most satisfactory purchase, but the purse of the purchaser must govern her choice, when she goes into more elaborate manufactures. Even when choosing among these her problems are not more simple. All costly china is not beautiful: some of it is atrociously ugly; little of it is adaptable. Like the ball dress of a young girl, it serves one occasion only. For unvarying adaptability nothing is better than white china with a gold border, marked with a gold

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monogram, but its appropriateness is apt to appear severe. Greater softness is had with plates bordered by a color, and having a colored design in the centre. Plates covered with flowers are often most charming, — tiny roses or violets scattered over a white surface. These may or may not be expensive. Sometimes, indeed, the very pretty ones are also cheap. The decorated plates and platters seen in shop windows, in studios, and country houses, are interesting for special courses, but are not to be recommended for a large table: the effect might be tiresome. People of limited means should choose simple things of established worth.

China vegetable dishes and platters should match the dinner plates, but platters are preferable plated or solid silver. They last a lifetime, outwearing many a china dish nicked or cracked by careless hands. A soup tureen is no longer a necessity, though a change of fashion may at any time revive it, and necessitate it on our table.

Saltcellars of glass, silver, or china, of a quaint and pretty design, always a thing from which the salt may be taken with a spoon. Pepper may be shaken, not salt.

Large dishes for fruit; smaller one for sweets.

When no special dish for a made dessert is possible — an ice cream or a pudding — a napkin must be folded and laid under it on a platter.

Tumblers, wine-glasses, finger-bowls — of plain, thin glass, when fine cut-glass is not possible. Plain glass pitchers, when nothing else is to be had, — never the highly ornamented cheap glass.

On no account permit any of the following articles on a table.

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A tablecloth of linen so coarse that it cannot be ironed to lie smooth: heavy linen is another affair, and not to be confused with this.

Tablecloths and napkins with red borders and fringe.

Small individual butter plates of china, glass, or silver.

Salt-holders in the shape of bottles with perforated metal tops.

Decorated sets of cheap china that come by the quantity, and which in design and color exactly repeat those used on washstands, — sets of china never seen in stores of any reputation, but which are sent to entrap the unwary of small towns and country districts.

Cheap colored glass pitchers and tumblers, — glass in blues, reds, and greens decorated with flowers, — which are not to be confused with colored claret glasses, though these glasses cost little, or with Bohemian glass.

Cheap plated silver, with much tracing and pretentious flourishes about the borders.

Cheap silver trays which can never be polished without the silver rubbing off and showing a dark metal underneath.

Silver treated with shellac to keep it from tarnishing.

Vessels of any kind for holding spoons, bowls up: spoons should be laid flat.

Fancy designs and combinations, arrangements in silver for salts, peppers, and spoons.

Crocheted cotton mats for putting under the vegetable dishes.

Crumb brushes with colored tin receptacles for the scraps of bread: a silver crumb-scraper, or, better still, a napkin and plate should be used; the pieces of bread being first removed with a fork and laid on an empty plate.

Ordinary stone or china pitchers for water or for milk: glass and silver are proper, unless the china pitcher is blue and white Canton, Dresden, or the interesting product of some well-known factory.



“NEVER FOR A DISPLAY OF THE TEASPOONS AND FORKS”

CHAPTER XII

SIDEBOARDS

I FEEL justified in devoting a short chapter to this subject, since it is one that has occasioned much confusion to many minds. What is proper and what is not proper in a sideboard are questions invariably asked by certain young housekeepers.

The worst and most hopeless form of sideboard, as I have said elsewhere, is that of the cheap oak of commerce, furnished with drawers below, a marble slab on top, a mirror above this, enclosed by two upright pieces at either end, supporting three or more shelves. When the monstrosity is adorned with casters, teaspoons placed bowls up in a tumbler or silver cup, cheap white china pitchers, pressed-glass sugar dishes, all placed on a fringed white cover with a red border, the tale of the objectionable is complete.

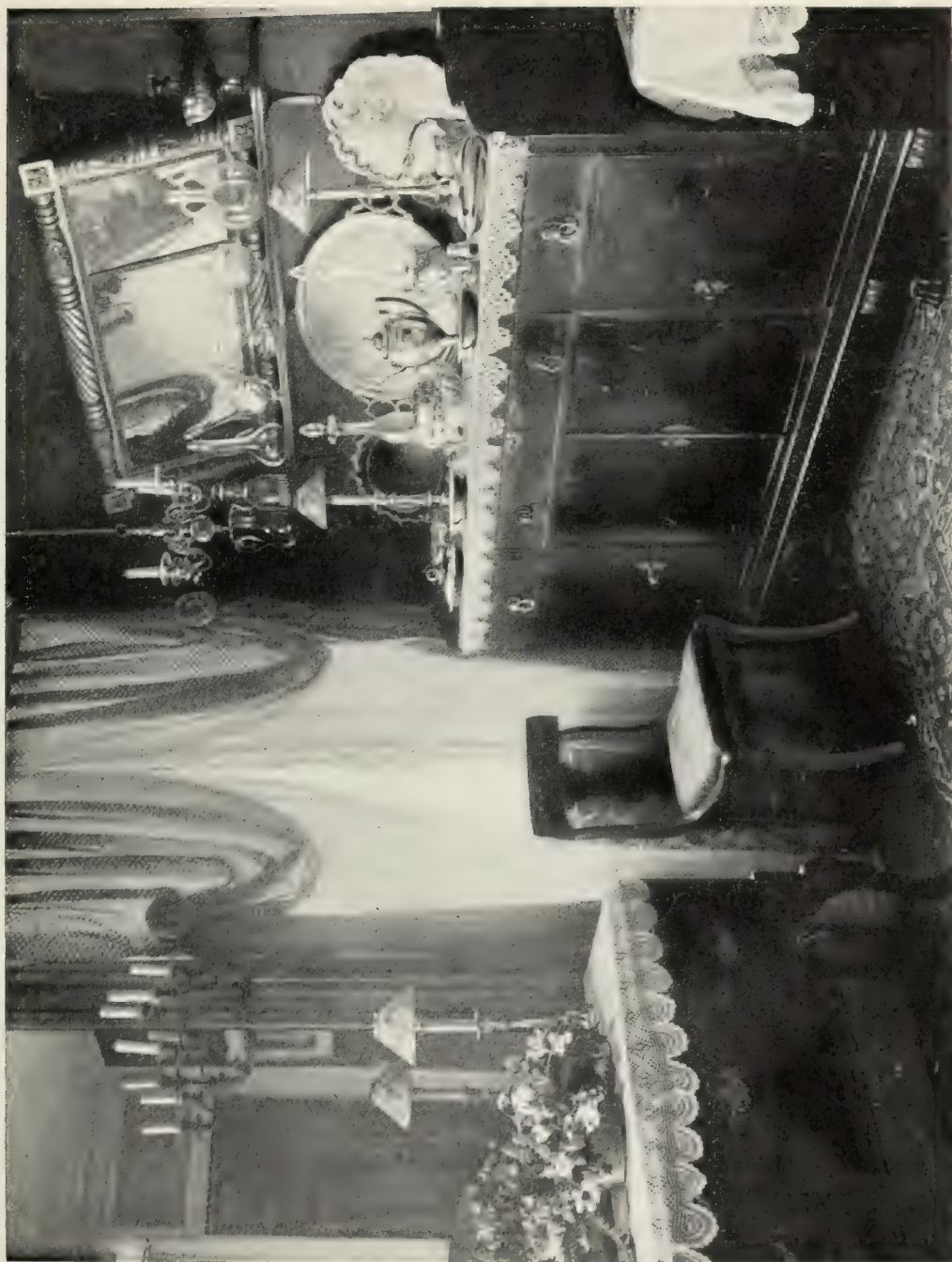
Of course there are oak sideboards, and there are sideboards with mirrors over them, and sideboards with pitchers standing on them, but none of these things in the way which I have just described, — never at least if the desideratum of good form has been attained. We have the black oak sideboards of Italy, with their carved shelves over the cupboard below, shelves sometimes of symmetrical design and

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

sometimes of uneven lengths and surfaces, and there are the beautiful light and dark oak sideboards of England, carved in high relief, and the massive old Flemish productions from Holland, that lend themselves with great affability to various interiors. We have, too, the beautiful mahogany sideboards of Chippendale and Sheraton, with their slender legs and broad flat tops. Then we have some that are now to be found in all "antique" shops, — sideboards which have been bought in old houses for a song and which now sell for a small fortune. These have flat surfaces, sometimes enclosed by a little railing, the space below the shelf running to the floor and occupied by drawers and closets. Sometimes these sideboards rest on claw feet, sometimes on simple rounded legs.

Some happy examples of sideboards and their appointments are shown in the illustrations, but for the further enlightenment of the reader it may be as well to suggest that sideboards, whatever their nature, are designed to hold and display the family plate and decanters, the silver pitchers and tankards, coffee and tea-pots, salvers, and small and large dishes — never for a display of the teaspoons and forks, the soup ladles, nor what is generally known as "small silver." These belong in the drawer of the sideboard or in a safe.

Glass should be kept under cover and not exposed to the dust; an exception is made only in the way of decanters or wine-bottles. Sometimes, when the woman of the house has inherited a collection



“SIDEBOARDS WHICH HAVE BEEN BOUGHT IN OLD HOUSES FOR A SONG.”

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

of fine old glass, crystal bottles, and covered dishes, she fills a sideboard with these. No silver is then displayed among them. The beauty of a unique collection justifies her departure from a general custom.

When a woman has no good silver, nothing but half-worn-out and over-decorated ugly plated ware, which she cannot keep bright, and when she has no fine crystal, it is better to arrange her sideboard simply, and without the plated silver pieces. She can use her candlesticks only, or, if she has some really interesting pieces of china, a good blue and white teapot, or one of Spode or old Worcester, the sideboard may be set with these, but never with the ordinary china of commerce. If she has only that, let her make up for her deficiencies with a vase of flowers, a fruit-dish prettily arranged, and the candlesticks. Care must be taken to keep things simple.

We have reverted to the saltcellar of our ancestors. Bottles with perforated tops are not permissible except in boarding-houses, where sometimes one is not altogether sure of the training of a neighbor, and where a question of time or the care of the table has also to be taken into consideration. Such bottles should never be permitted on a sideboard, though saltcellars belong there.

Castors are never used in these days. When one wants an extra seasoning, the oil and vinegar cruets are passed, though never of course at a dinner-party. Castors, if they are possessed at all, are kept hidden.

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

A claret bottle may stand on a sideboard, but a beer bottle — never. When whiskey is permitted, it is decanted, sometimes into glass decanters, often into small stone jugs. Now and then these jugs are marked with the owner's name.

When the dining-room is large and the amount of silver too great for one sideboard, a second and smaller one appears, — never its duplicate, and often, in fact, merely a series of shelves over the cabinet below. On this, other pieces of silver and bits of fine crystal are shown. Sometimes the finger-bowls are placed upon one of these shelves, just before dinner. They are of course kept under cover between times.

It is by no means unusual to see a well-polished sideboard uncovered, the silver standing on the mahogany board, though a heavy linen scarf is always in order. Small doilies under different pieces produce an unpleasant impression, as of spots scattered over a dark surface. The linen cover may exactly fit the top. But these covers will be discussed under table-linen.



“A CLARET BOTTLE MAY STAND ON A SIDEBOARD, BUT A BEER
BOTTLE—NEVER”

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

CHAPTER XIII

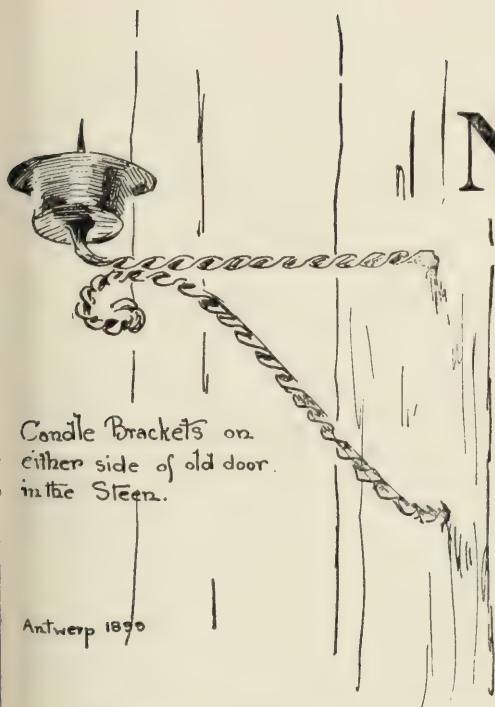
PARLORS

NO one, however humble, is without some position in the world, entailing relations with friends and neighbors, and duties of a social character. The wife of a parson has one kind of duty to perform, the wife of a statesman another, the spinster a third. Each must determine how the duties of her station are to be fulfilled, and whether

the part of the house in which they are performed shall stand for cheerfulness, for welcome, for repose, or mere formality.

Unless we determine these things for ourselves, our parlors must forever remain failures. Without a guiding principle all efforts at decoration are tentative. If we work with no object in view, can we blame fortune for lack of objects accomplished?

By a parlor I mean that room which, when the setting aside of a series is not possible, is specially



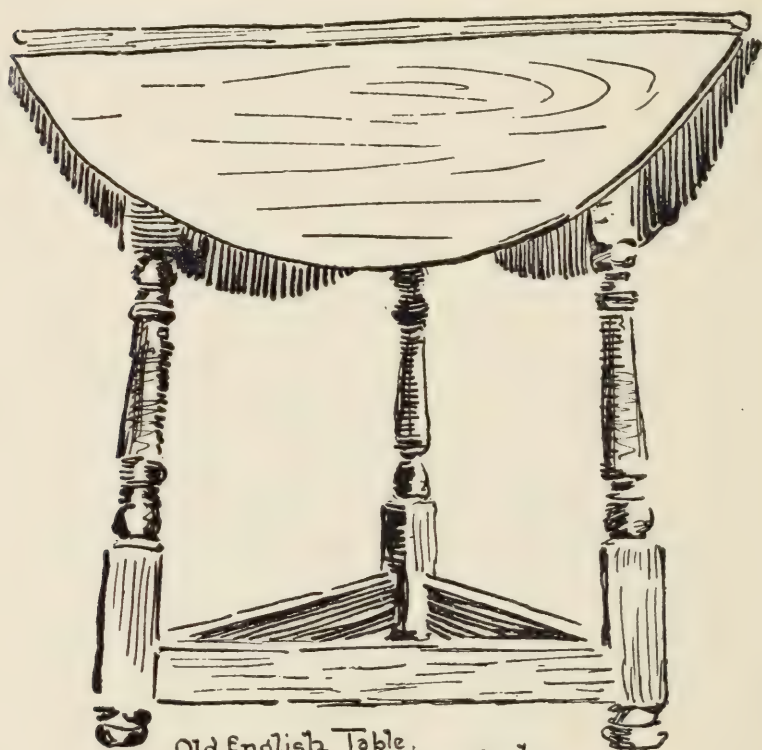
Candle Brackets on
either side of old door.
in the Steen.

Antwerp 1890

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

reserved not only for our own recreation, but for the reception of our visitors.

I use the word advisedly, even while recognizing to what abuses it has been subjected, and while appreciating the efforts which have been made to substitute another in our common speech. For cer-



Old English Table.
Two feet high.

tainly the parlor of an every-day apartment can hardly be designated a "drawing-room" and certainly it should be something more than a mere sitting-room, if visitors are to be received in it. And, since it must be used for more formal purposes, it should be characterized by a certain reserve,

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

the absence of which would be easily excusable in a living-room pure and simple.

In town houses with family living-rooms, to be sure, parlors may be referred to as "drawing-rooms," but the term can hardly be applied to the parlors of people living in country districts and small towns, in army posts, in the houses of clergymen, or wherever persons of refinement but limited means are to be found, leading lives that for all their unpretentious character still involve the observance of many social obligations.

Consultation with a dictionary will justify the use of "parlor," — a word originally designating a room set apart from the great hall for private conference, and which now means that room in a house reserved for formal and sometimes public uses. The word is found in Chaucer.

" — two other ladys sete and she,
Within a paved parlour."

"Into a parlour by" reads an old English ballad. Shakespeare uses the word; and Izaak Walton: — "Walk into the parlour, you will find one book or other, in the window, to entertain you the while."

Parlors are like manners. The "best parlors," so long decried of New England, were like the Sunday outfit of work-a-day people, or like the court dresses which the celebrated laundress wore when Napoleon made her a lady of his court. Who will ever forget *Rejane* as she played the rôle? How awkward and ill at ease she was in her

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

new clothes, not knowing how to wear her petticoats, tumbling over her train to the intense amusement of the other court-ladies who managed theirs as easily as birds of gay plumage manage their wings. A genial, sunny-tempered woman until

that moment, the necessity of donning an apparel to which she was unaccustomed inspired in her a degree of awkward self-consciousness that destroyed all her charm.

I always think of her when the question of some parlors arises. They are so apt to look as though their owners were not accustomed to them, as if they bore no more relation to the daily lives of their owners than clothes worn on state occasions. It is just because in many instances parlors are only used on state occasions that most of them create this impression of awkwardness. They are furnished with uniform pieces and

adorned with ornaments of a regulation size, and there they end. Like Rejane's court dresses, the necessity for using them now and then destroys all the ease and the charm which their owners on other occasions might have possessed.

I have seen prosperous people bother as much



Small Colonial Tea table.
(Soyly painted.)



HOW WALL SPACE MAY BE UTILIZED

(SHOWING USE OF SAME WALL SPACE AS IN ILLUSTRATION OPPOSITE PAGE 192)

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

about their parlors as impecunious bread-winners obliged to content themselves with cheese and denim. My sympathies go out to them. I know so well what the difficulties will mean in the way of struggle and disappointment so long as we go on missing the vital point, of "the one book or other . . . to entertain you the while." Everywhere else in a home the question of material necessities, of pure utility, may rule. The parlor must express something more; prove our knowledge of the conveniences, our possession of individual tastes, our intellectual sympathies; our breeding, our place in the world; our general measure of man or woman. In a parlor we must show evidence of what we consider beautiful, what we find useful and refreshing; what we deem worthy of offering our friends and our family in "hours of ease"—in short, like laughter, our parlors betray the degree of cultivation we have attained. There's the rub.

I remember, some years ago, finding myself in a small country house that belonged to quiet, old-fashioned people whose son had been educated for the army, and who was then an officer in it. The younger daughter had been away on a visit to him, and had come home with some ideas of making her parlor like those she had seen on her journey. The rest of the family had been contented, until then, with whitewashed parlor walls and one or two comfortable chairs. She, poor child, brought back with her a single Japanese fan and a solitary piece of ugly Turkish embroidery (the craze for them had just

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

begun), and these she tacked together, directly in the middle of the whitewashed board that enclosed the open fireplace. The result was infinitely pathetic. With woods and streams all about her, she might so easily have made the room beautiful with ferns, filling ordinary brown stone jugs and pitchers with laurel; opening her fireplace for logs which would have cost her nothing.

Yet I know another whitewashed room in a country place designed by young artists who could not afford paper — the most restful, the most delightful, and certainly the most refreshing room on a warm summer day to be found anywhere along our coast. And what had these young girls done to make it so? Nothing but to introduce flowers and greens everywhere — ferns and blossoms in glass bowls on the ample pine tables; bunches of laurel in pots on pedestals in the corners; branches of maple on the mantel, green awnings at the windows, boxes of flowers on the sills.

No one need suffer, therefore, who cannot emulate a neighbor's costly appointments. The privilege of extravagance belongs to the few, but the right to refinement is a legacy to us all.

The aim even of the opulent in these days is to use inexpensive wash materials in the parlors of their summer cottages. I know no instance in which such happy results have been attained as in a house on the Maine coast rented by a New Yorker. When she took it, it was probably the ugliest cottage to be found on the island. This is what she did with



HOW WALL SPACE MAY BE UTILIZED

(SHOWING USE OF SAME WALL SPACE AS IN ILLUSTRATION OPPOSITE PAGE 190)

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

the bare, long, and narrow parlor, having a fireplace at one end, and a bay-window on the side opposite a pair of big ungainly folding doors.

She painted the wood-work white, and covered the walls with a paper showing pink roses on a white ground; made her curtains of white dotted muslin ruffled with lace, tying them at the windows, and the folding doors with big bows of soft pink cheesecloth, matching in color the roses on the paper. She painted the ugly furniture white, covering the chairs and sofas with a white cotton material showing a tiny stripe. The only silk permitted in the room was in the linings of the lamp-shades and on the cushions everywhere distributed — she is a woman who understands the art of cushions, the value of those civilizing touches which soft down sofa pillows lend the barest room.

Any one else might have a flowered paper and soft pink cheesecloth bows, but lacking her tact in the arrangement of her furniture, they would have missed her results. Few people understand even what this tact is, which is one reason why a drawing-room filled with newly arrived guests waiting to have dinner announced so often takes on an awkward air. People are bunched or crowded together in most houses, and suggest the fact of their having to wait, and not of their having come together at that moment to talk. No one who enters a room should have to peer about for a seat, or to find himself awkwardly placed when he ventures into a chair. And because this woman does understand, none of

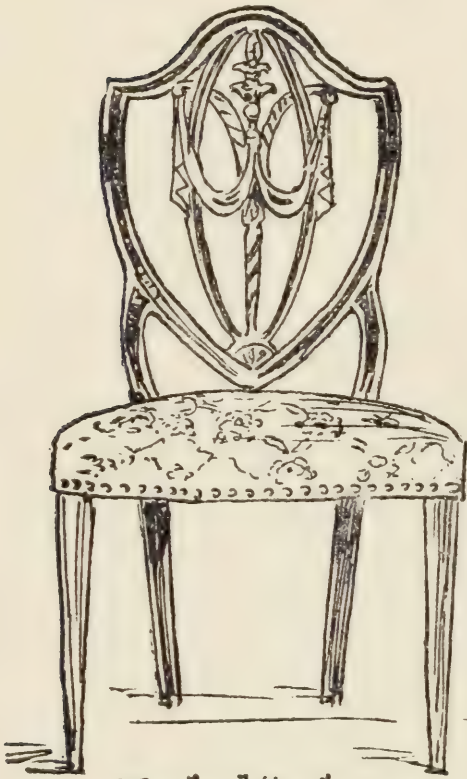
HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

her sofas and chairs are arranged as for a lecture, or so that every one in a room must face every one else. Conversation, as she realizes, does not consist in haranguing assemblages, though some people seem to think so. You may want to see the face of

your opposite neighbor at dinner, but want to escape it in the parlor. She knows that too! Guests who enter her parlor form themselves into groups of twos, threes, or fours, as the case may be, or they are led unconsciously to certain parts of the room where chairs and sofas are grouped to receive them.

In her summer-house parlor, then, and directly in front of her fire, which must often in that climate be lighted on August days, a small sofa for two is placed with a chair for a third person drawn up at right angles

to it. Back of this sofa, close against it, is a large oblong table with a high crystal lamp, and white shade of cut cardboard. Small sofas are scattered about the room, one against the wall at right angles to the chimney; others on either side of the folding doors, and one back of the large centre-table. The bay-window holds the writing-table with its ap-



Hepplewhite chair.

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

pointments in silver. The piano, the only dark object in the room, is in the very farthest corner, its keys to the wall. Its back is hung with white ; against it stands a table with photographs and silver frames. Flowers in tall vases are everywhere.

Each one of the sofas or tables has some lamp and chair arranged with reference to it. Half a dozen groups of people may talk in this room without being disturbed by each other.

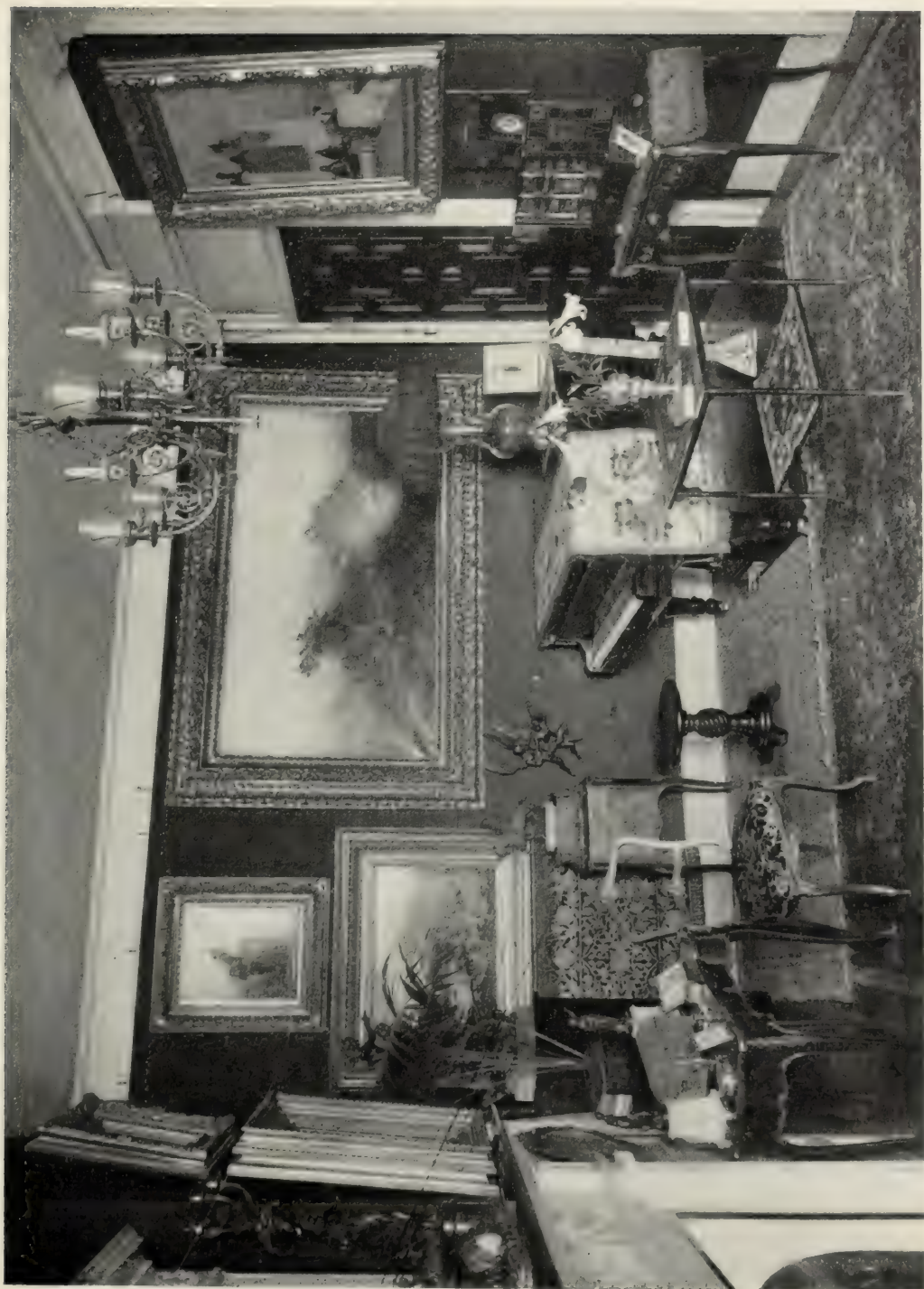
When a parlor is not in daily use, its mistress may be roused some day by a shock, discovering herself surrounded by guests difficult to entertain, sitting about her room in awkward isolation. If she would spare herself a second discomfiture, she should on the instant of their departure begin to rearrange her room, making a careful study of possible situations, conditions, and emergencies. Her wisest course would be to stand at her own parlor door and fancy herself a visitor just arriving. Would she want to go boldly forward and take a solitary chair in the middle of a big and half-empty room ? Would she not prefer one into which she could slip just by the door, especially if she were a stranger ? Would she want to discover such a chair, even when near the door, placed by a lady's desk, a note or two perhaps open before her ? Would she again want to establish herself among the cushions of a divan as the only available sitting-place, or in a very low and softly cushioned chair out of which, were she portly, she would have to go through gymnastics to rise ? Or, once again, would she like to

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

seat herself facing the glare of a window, or the monotony of an ugly blank wall, or a mirror that reflected a pantry door, — not a pleasant picture? And would she not, were she a guest in the house, like a lamp by which to read, and a cushion for her back, and a table on which her book could be laid? And last, because most important, how shall the guest be provided for, be welcomed, without being admitted to all the family intimacies?

She should ask herself every one of these questions and a dozen more if her imagination be fertile. She should ask herself how she would like certain things were she a guest in *other* houses, and what she could be to better the condition of visitors in hers. Indeed, I sometimes believe that the proper furnishing of a parlor means nothing less than a question of ethical values or a problem in psychology.

— In any successful room, the interests must be concentrated, not scattered. The same rule holds good in art. But it must be remembered that this concentration of interest by no means implies the necessity of what is known in every-day parlance as “a cosey corner.” I wonder who invented the term, and why it should have spread like a pestilence over the land, dragging with it a host of ills, filling parlors with right-angle triangle lounges piled with cushions and draped with fish-nets over spears, or Turkish hangings suspended from impossible baldequins. A room may be made cosey: it implies a meagre purpose to make only one corner so.



“THE INTERESTS MUST BE CONCENTRATED, NOT SCATTERED”

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

By centring interest around a fireside, drawing up chairs, tables, and sofas, so that people may find themselves placed comfortably before it; by setting aside certain other parts of the room for reading, writing, sewing, or music, is to fill it with cosey places. The secret of knowing how to do this is the secret of making a successful parlor. It can only be done with a thought back of every move — that of making special pursuits or forms of relaxation easy, or of insuring repose, seclusion, or comfort, for various moods. It can never be done when the object alone has been to produce a “cosey corner,” while the rest of the room



A Summer Parlor

is left bare and uninviting. Even when the heart is set upon the divan with a fish-net or a hanging over it, like that of a neighbor, the corner in which the right-angle triangle lounge is found, must not be out of key with the rest of the room, and never by any possibility designated or treated as the *one* “cosey corner” in the room.

In conventional brick or brown-stone houses,

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

found everywhere throughout our country, houses put up in rows with front stoops and narrow halls, we find the parlor of all others most difficult to treat. At one time in our history, even among the very rich, one method alone was followed. Between the tall windows of the front parlor there was always a pier glass in a heavy gilt frame, a marble slab below it; over the marble mantel there was another mirror in a still heavier gilt frame — an oval or a round mirror, this one hung so high nobody could see in it. Then there were lace curtains falling straight. A sofa flat against one wall faced a piano plump against another. Sometimes there was a marble-topped centre-table. This arrangement was almost universal, even when the furniture was covered with a costly textile, a velvet or a satin brocade, and even when expensive family portraits were hung on the walls, or the tables were set with pieces of porcelain, books, albums, or Japanese bronzes.

After this, came the introduction of the tea-table, with a kettle and china cups and saucers to catch the dust. We have learned now that tea, when served in the parlor, must be brought in on a tray and placed in front of the hostess on a small table, which has been kept hidden somewhere in the corner of the room, and which disappears again when tea is over and the tray and the steaming kettle are carried away. But there are still people who never seem able to part from the old set method of arranging their furniture, and who understand nothing about the necessity of breaking up the lines in a room.

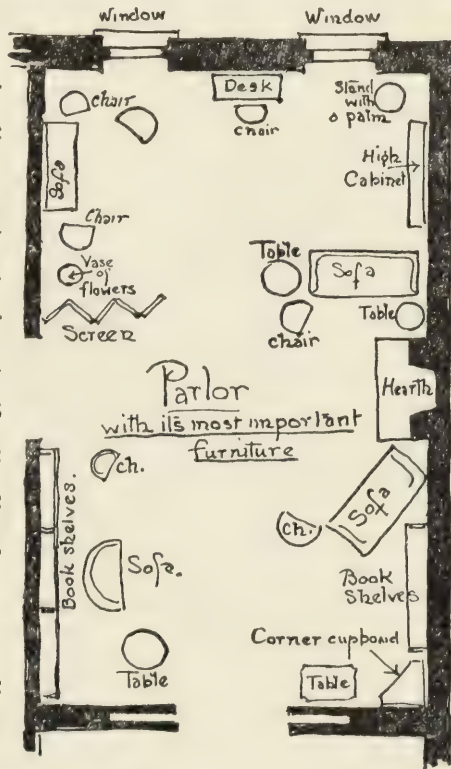


THE WALL SPACE RUNNING FROM THE WINDOW

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

The very configuration of one of these long, narrow rooms is awkward — two windows at one end of the room, facing folding doors at the other, and the fireplace directly opposite the door into the hall. The general habit now is, to move the door farther down the hall, so as to give greater privacy about the fireplace. When this is done, that part of the hall under the staircase is furnished with a seat, a large mirror, and a tree for the coats and hats of visitors. Nothing but the chair and the table for cards then appears by the front entrance. But even when this change of parlor doors is not possible and the opening must face the fireplace, the subject is not hopeless.

The awkwardness of the general plan was quite forgotten in one parlor I know. The walls were lined with bookcases six feet high. Above these were pictures. The grand piano, covered by a piece of rich embroidery thrown over the end, and holding a tall vase with flowers, came between the fireplace and the folding doors, its keys toward the dining-room. At the foot of the piano a small sofa stood



HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

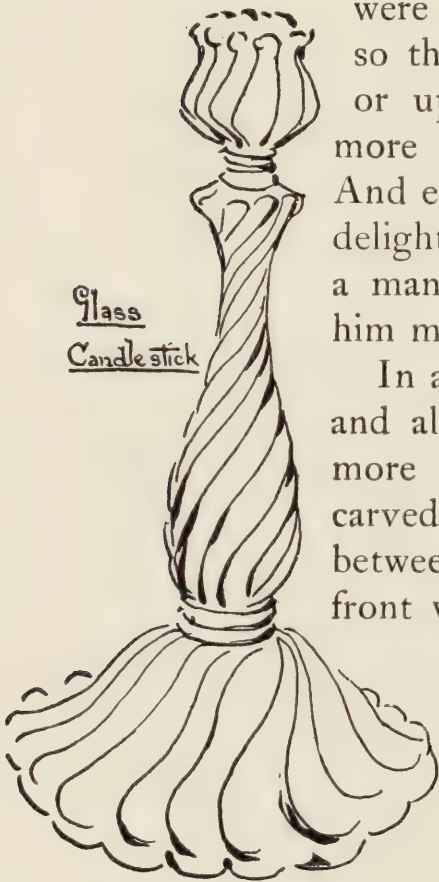
at right angles with the fireplace, the piano forming its background. On the other side of the fireplace was a desk, drawn out from the bookcase; between the windows and door into the hall there was a carved mahogany sofa; opposite the piano a mahogany table with books. By all these tables

were big chairs easily wheeled about, so that they could be drawn together or up by the sofa whenever two or more people wanted to talk together. And everybody did want to talk in that delightful old parlor once belonging to a man of letters, who gathered about him many a famous company.

In another parlor exactly like this, — and all these parlors are exactly alike, more is the pity, — there is a long carved sofa placed flat against the wall between the door from the hall and the front window. This is a conventional

arrangement relieved by a happy inspiration. At the end of the sofa by the hall door a tall vase filled with long-stemmed roses stands on the floor, a table by it with a lamp, and behind the

table, concealing it from the door, a low carved screen with an inlay of glass. At right angles to the sofa, with its back to the screen, is a Chippendale arm-chair. This makes it possible, then, for two people on the sofa to talk to one on the chair,





THE WALL SPACE RUNNING FROM THE WINDOW

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

who at the same time has been put to no trouble for a seat, nor found himself forced to seat himself directly opposite the people on the sofa. In the window at the other end of the sofa is another chair which can also be drawn up. Between the windows is a fine old desk ; opposite the sofa, a tall piece of mahogany with books behind glass doors. Between it and the mantel, and at right angles to the fire, is a small sofa for two, with a chair by it, a table and a lamp. The other end of the room has low book-cases on either side, with more tables and sofas and chairs.

The happiest arrangement of one of these rooms, when smaller, was accomplished with the aid of a carpenter, who filled one of the windows with a low shelf to form a seat, and running it in an unbroken line down the wall from that window to the door. This seat was covered with a velours of a low tone. On the opposite wall, between the other window and the fireplace, the space was filled with a low bookcase, divided half-way its length by a seat large enough to hold two persons. This seat was also formed by a pine shelf. Like that on the opposite wall, it was covered with velours, which ran from the floor, over the seat, and up the wall to a level with the top shelf of the bookcase, where it was finished with a flat gimp nailed with invisible tacks. At right angles to the fireplace and facing windows was a small sofa with a tall lamp at one end. Back of the sofa by a bay window (this house was on a corner) there was a desk. The

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

opposite corner, a bookcase, following the right angle of the wall; in front of it a carved table with lamps, flowers, and books. Three or four chairs to be drawn about, completed the appointments. The walls of the room had been treated with bur-laps washed with gold. The wood-work was buff.

The splitting of a line of book-shelves with a seat will always be found advisable when space is required, especially in the little front rooms of English-basement houses, or in the hall rooms of dwelling-houses made over into apartments, or in conventional parlors like those described, which are often but twelve or fourteen feet wide. The window — for when such a parlor is small there is never but the one window — the window then is left without masses of drapery, but is filled with rubber trees, palms, and Boston ferns. I saw this once, and I have never forgotten the room. In front of the window, which was opposite the door leading to the hall, ran a small high-backed sofa of good design, only large enough to hold two. Behind the sofa there was space for the maid to get at the plants and the window-shades. To the left of the sofa a row of book-shelves were built, divided to make a small seat, the wall forming its back. This enabled three persons to talk comfortably together, while a fourth could be seated in a large chair by the door leading into an adjoining room. The rest of the little parlor was filled with books and pictures, one big cathedral chair at the other end flat against the wall, beside a table holding a lamp. The walls

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

were green, the wood-work white, the chairs covered with soft silks and old tapestries.

While the breaking up of lines in a room should always be made an object of special study, a small interior must always have its important or essential pieces arranged with all the compactness possible. A foolish sacrifice of space is made when a small room is filled with large pieces of furniture, especially with lounging-chairs standing out from the wall, or with sofas having projecting backs. The furniture chosen or made for small parlors should fit against the walls, the lines of the room being broken up afterwards by tables or chairs. This may be more clearly understood, perhaps, after examining one of the illustrations accompanying this chapter.

This room just off the parlor is used as a study by its owner, and considered with it in choice of color. It is only seven feet by eight. Many an old-fashioned bed was larger. Yet the study has a long divan (made narrow enough to serve as a sofa, and with a box underneath for dresses), a large desk, a chair, a folding table, a dozen pictures, and several hundred books on shelves at the head and foot of the divan, and again under the mirror at the side of the door. The room is in greens and yellows. A green burlaps covers the wall, green corduroy the divans. The curtain over the door opening into a closet filled with books and papers, is of green silk embroidered with dull yellow. A yellow leaded glass fills the window. The ceiling has a dull yellow

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

paper. The lines are broken by plants and by hanging-lamps suspended overhead.

Enough has been said, perhaps, to prove that in spite of like proportions and construction no one room need look like another; but to emphasize the fact more strongly, two illustrations have been introduced, giving different views of two parlors in an apartment-house, alike in size except as regards the height of the ceiling.

One parlor has been treated in greens and whites. The walls are covered with the green cartridge paper; the wood-work, ceiling, and thin curtains are white; the over-curtains are green looped over big gilt disks. Yellows are introduced in brass sconces, hanging candelabra, picture frames, and-irons, and firearms.

In the other parlor, greens and yellows alone are permitted, except on the divan, where the cover takes up the colors of a Cashmere rug. The wood-work is green. The walls are covered with green burlaps, the curtains and furniture are of green corduroy. Thin yellow Verona silk curtains hang over the white muslin on the panes. The yellow of these curtains is repeated everywhere, — in brass milk-cans, hanging-lamps, andirons, and bird cages. Both parlors, then, have been furnished in green and brass, and yet they bear not the slightest resemblance to each other.

The wall-space running from the window, filled in one instance by a carved mahogany sofa and in another by a bookcase and divan, might have been

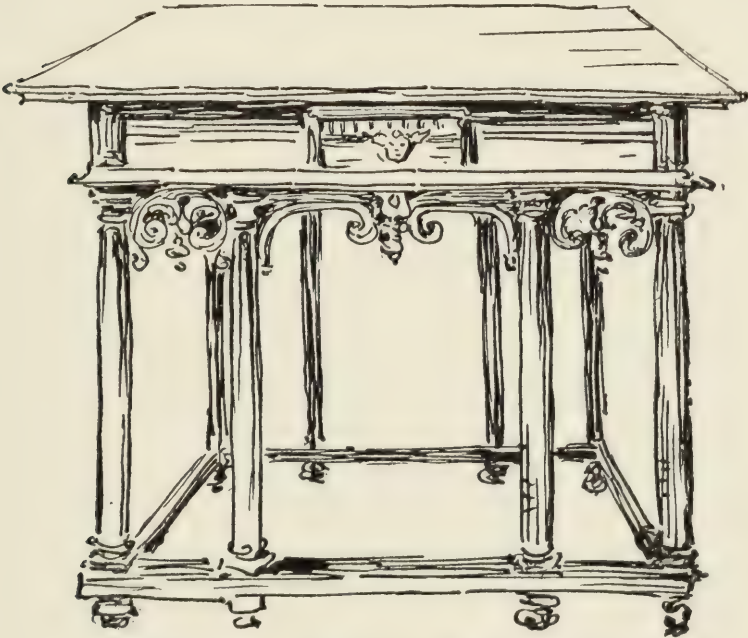


“ONE PARLOR HAS BEEN TREATED IN GREEN AND WHITE”

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

treated in still other ways. A piano might have been placed there, or book-shelves running up to the ceiling. Again, low shelves might have been divided by one of the seats to which reference has already been made.

In regard to the brass Holland milk-can on the parlor table, — a table, by the way, once in the boudoir



Sketched in South Kensington Museum
from a
French table of the 16th century.

of Marie Antoinette, — there is nothing to be urged in defence except the plea of its color. It might be argued in fact, that every law of propriety had been violated, and that under no conditions should a milk-can once belonging to a peasant, and a table once belonging to the Queen of a different country,

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

indeed that a milk-can at all, should appear together in a parlor. But the informalities of this one justify the combination, and the color of the can itself, and the colors it repeats, now from this object now from that, are beautiful. When a white rose with green leaves is placed on the table by it, the reflections, broken by the dented, uneven surface of the brass, are irresistible. When a mass of Easter lilies or chrysanthemums is thrust into it, or a pot of ivy fills the can and falls about the sides, it is no longer a milk-can, but a receptacle for flowers. The Marie Antoinette table, being covered with a black Egyptian marble, cannot be spoiled by drops of water from the flowers.

Every nation has its ideal, its standard of true excellence, its great desideratum. When you look from the street into the windows of a certain class of Cuban houses, you see a room bare of hangings, with now and then chromos and colored lamps, but always the long narrow rug in the middle of a floor, and a dozen or more rocking-chairs drawn up about it, facing each other. In the sitting-rooms of French peasants in a certain district there is invariably the bed with its feathered mattress laid smooth and three chairs placed formally against it, — chairs that no one dreams of occupying except perhaps an occasional cat. Round the chimneypiece there are benches and seats for the guests.

With us the standard of excellence varies from time to time, otherwise we might have been hopelessly committed to many a hideous fashion — stuffed



“GREENS AND YELLOWS ALONE ARE PERMITTED”

(SEE PAGE 204)

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

birds under glass ; framed samplers or mottoes on the wall ; family Bibles on marble-topped tables ; worsted mats under lamps ; daguerrotypes on the mantel ; pink and white coral in the cabinets ; rocking-chairs tied with bows of ribbon ; rocking-chairs in parlors at all.

Yes, it is certainly better to live where fashions change now and then, especially in parlors, which brings me again to a point I have often urged ; when a parlor is to be arranged, the foundations only should be at first laid. Then is there a chance to grow, — the possibility of making a better choice of objects as tastes develop ; of buying separate and interesting pieces of mahogany, good pictures, good books ; of building up the room, in fact. If this last rule of going slowly is followed, no one will commit the folly of a “parlor suit.” The very name carries a disagreeable suggestion, to persons who have lived in large towns and seen these “suits” set out on the pavement for sale. Furniture may match, but a “suit” is something to be shunned.

“What kind of a parlor suit is coming in now?” is a question asked again and again by the inexperienced wanting to do the proper thing, as if the question were to be answered as easily as one relating to clothes. A dress has more or less of an ephemeral value. It is in fashion this year and out of it the next. One’s household furniture can never be regarded in this way. The moment too ephemeral a character is given to it, that moment all sense of the abiding is destroyed in a house. At the same

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time one is quite right in wanting to know what new and pretty things are being put out on the market, for the manufacturers are constantly changing their patterns and their styles, sometimes in obedience to an example like that set long ago by Mr. William Morris, and sometimes because of those furnished by artists who have educated us to know what is beautiful, and have given us their reasons for pronouncing bad certain departures from the beautiful.

Furniture made by a lover of good lines and fine workmanship must be better than that which is turned out to satisfy the demands of persons whose greatest desire is something to show for their money. I say this because only the other day I went through a large factory where chairs and sofas of every description were being made, — so ugly that I wanted to get out of the place, and so costly that even had I wanted to buy, I should have had to turn away in despair.

When I asked why these articles were so hideous and why it was not as easy to make a beautiful thing, I was told that many persons living out of town would buy nothing else. Therefore, if a question about what new suits were in fashion had to be answered, I could only reply, "Some very ugly ones." And if another common question were given me to answer, and I should be asked to declare in favor of furniture "entirely covered with upholstery" as opposed to that "showing wooden frames," I could not do it.

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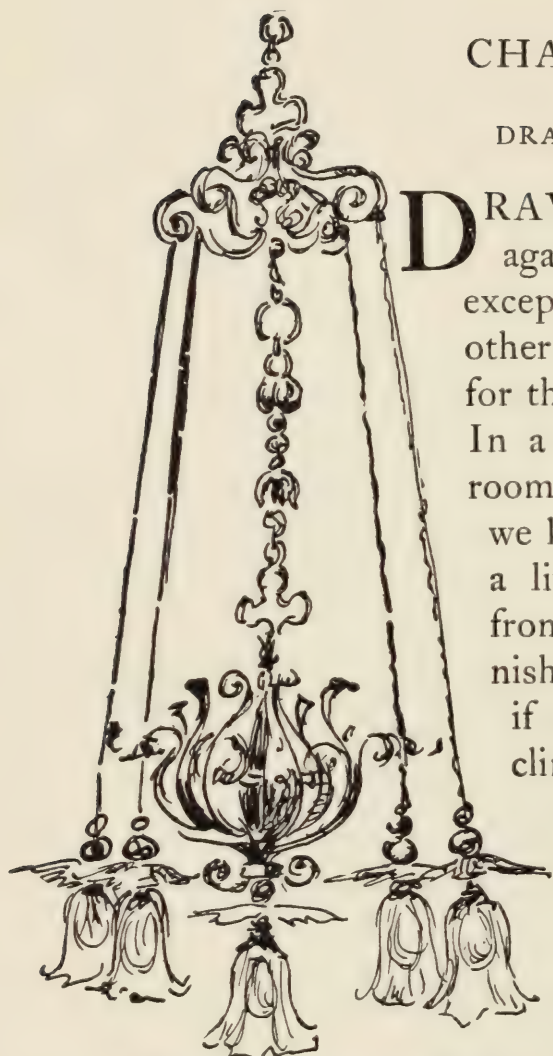
The only wise course for the searcher after excellence is to study good pictures and models of mahogany. We excel in this country in what is now called the Colonial furniture, and good imitations of these, when the genuine is not possible, is the safest investment. No one, on the other hand, should be persuaded to buy an imitation inlaid mahogany chair, covered with a brocade, and cheap at five dollars. It would introduce a false note into any parlor.



German Wrought Iron. Cresting for low wooden screen

CHAPTER XIV

DRAWING-ROOMS



An English electrolier

DRAWING-ROOMS, it must again be urged, are impossible except in houses where some other room has been provided for the recreation of the family. In a high-stoop town house a room on the second floor is, as we know, generally set aside as a living-room or library, the front parlor then being furnished as a drawing-room, or, if the tastes of a family incline it to musicals, as a drawing-room and music-room combined. Heavy draperies are avoided. Little or no bric-à-brac is permitted. A quiet paper, oftener a striped or brocaded silk, covers the walls. A line of low

bookcases extends around the room, painted cream or white like the rest of the wood-work, and filled only with the best bound books. The floors are

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

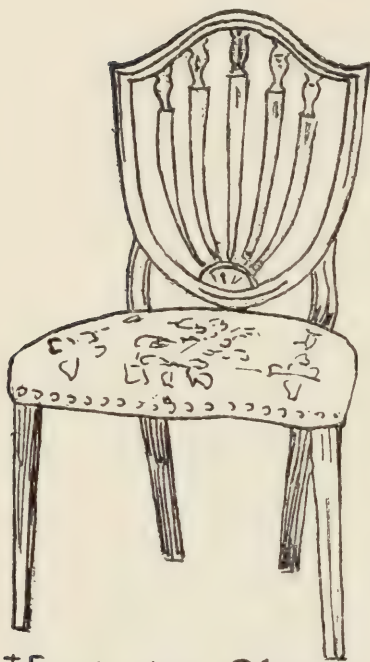
bare except for rugs. The furniture is French — a cream-white wood sometimes ornamented with gold and upholstered to match the wall-hangings. Small gilt chairs are permitted while the music is going on — substantial and well-modelled gilt chairs, it goes without saying. The presence of pictures on the walls is left to the discretion of the householder. The lamp and electric lights are shaded by silks of soft cream tones. Now and then one note of color is added by a high-backed gold chair covered with red damask ; but there should only be one chair or — many. Two red chairs in a room of this kind would be disastrous, suggesting the fact of there being but two and no more. One chair, on the other hand, would suggest the possibility of its having been chosen because of a unique excellence, or as a chair for a privileged or distinguished person. Of course the entire room might be furnished with these chairs, but that would alter the scheme of decoration. On ordinary occasions the chair is drawn up by the fire, and the afternoon tea-table is brought there to the lady of the house. Neither the mantel nor the tops of the bookcases are encumbered with bric-à-brac, one or two choice pieces alone being permissible, — generally a glass or two from Venice holding roses.

The wood-work may be painted a delicate gray, and the walls covered with gray silk, a paper, or a silvery gray burlaps ; the furniture to be mahogany, oak, or French with cream-white wood and touches of gilt, upholstered with reference to the textile on

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the wall. The walls may again be finished with a four-foot dado of green velours finished with a gimp supporting a flowered paper with roses on a white ground, the color of the velours repeating that of the rose-stems above. The furniture, of mahogany,

would then be covered with a green matching the dado, the hangings of rose silk looped over brass rods. Mirrors in gilt frames and brass sconces might be the only decoration.



Hepplewhite Chair

a type common here at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Nothing does more for these rooms than four corner mirrors sixteen inches wide, with bevelled edges and no frames. They must run from the floor to the picture-moulding, which should be at the level of the upper casing of the doors and windows. With their reflections they serve two purposes: that of bringing the room together, while suggesting spaces beyond. It all depends upon where you are sitting. The charm

of them is that you are never forced to look directly at yourself, never placed in the embarrassing position of one seeking to avoid the appearance of being bewitched by a study of her own features every time an eyelid is raised. Their purpose is to beguile the vision, and the angle at which they are placed does this, for they

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must cut directly across the corners. I saw them first many years ago in the house of a friend who had seen them in Norway. Her drawing-room was long, narrow, and low-ceiled. The wood-work was dark, the walls covered with a Japanese paper of rich tones. The furniture was mahogany. Though the room was low and had but two front windows, I was constantly charmed by an impression of space, as of rooms and stretches beyond.

Now that mirrors are becoming more and more fashionable in the decoration of houses, the need of studying their reflections grows. The object of a mirror is not to reflect a glare, nor a blank wall, nor some ugly defect beyond, but to bring a pleasant object to you, and to do so with tact — without making the intention too obvious. Mirrors in parlors are not introduced to let you see the hang of a walking skirt. Mirrors in dressing-rooms or in the “parlors” of tailors’ establishments will do that. The secret of how “to entertain you the while” is the principle that leads to the successful placing of them.

It is not to be supposed that the craze for things Japanese has left the drawing-rooms, even of high-stoop houses, unaffected. Japanese silks are employed in the hangings; Japanese straw papers cover the walls; gas and electric light fixtures are made of Japanese bronzes, or modelled after those repeating the form of some flower, generally the lotus; the pictures on the walls are Japanese only — not framed water-color sketches, but *Kakemono*,

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pictures painted on strips of silk or gauze and mounted on rollers; the bric-à-brac pieces of Japanese porcelain or bronzes.

Of course, being Americans, these householders who have Japanese parlors or drawing-rooms are obliged to have chairs, so making a departure from the customs of Orientals who sit on the floor; but the chairs admitted are never obtrusively American, never upholstered and tufted and tasselled. They are made of wood, dark and low in tone, and sometimes heavy.

Here in America we live in an age of building. Blocks of old houses are being swept out of existence to make way for new and splendid dwellings. Far and near, wherever we go, the air is rent by the hammers of steel-drivers and carpenters. This activity, this constant remodelling of old houses when a construction of the new is not possible, is an interesting sign of the times. The first impulse of the man of inflated fortune (and our country is full of them) is to build, to change the nature of his former habitation. He may, in so doing, want to revert to the customs of his grandfather; it is often his pride. He seems to have convinced himself that the customs of his fathers were not what they might have been. He takes scant pride in their preservation, and in this who is there to condemn him? Why should he want to abide by a fashion sanctioning a front parlor, an unlighted and unventilated middle parlor, and a back drawing-room with two windows? Why should he be blamed for doing

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as he does,—for trying in every way to attain to something more livable and more enjoyable?

One of his methods is to take down all the partitions on a parlor floor except that which shuts it off from the front hall entrance, and to put up columns, making one large room full of angles. High and sumptuous leather screens are then introduced to shut one part of the room from the other, the front part being reserved for formal receptions, the middle part, with its huge fireplace and its deep recess (made by cutting off the hall), for an after-dinner lounging place; and the back part as the dining-room. By removing the screens the whole space may be thrown into one, and used for music or dancing. The library or living-room being on the floor above, the privacy of the family is not sacrificed to social pretences. Besides this, in a room so large, no one can possibly hear what is said at the other end, or know when the table is being laid for dinner behind the tall screens fifty feet away.

When the building laws are not broken, and the depth of the block is sufficient, an addition to the house is made by a room in the rear, to which access is had from the dining-room through a passageway lined with books and hung with brass lamps. This room, used as a studio, living-room, or library, adds enormously to the comfort of a household and to the beauty of a house, especially when its floor-level is below that of the main house, the descent being made by several steps. A balcony from a

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second-story window will open into the room when the ceilings are high, as in the studios of sculptors. The presence of an extra room makes it possible to use the front parlor as a drawing-room.

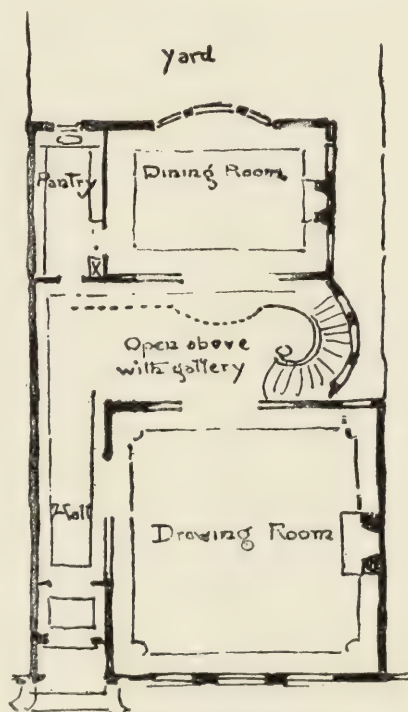
Quite as delightful, when there is sufficient space in the rear of a town house, is an addition at the back, which will afford a dining-room on the first floor and a library above. Such an addition, however, is only conventional and uninteresting, unless a wide passage is left between the old part of the house and the new, and unless a special feature is made of the staircase which leads to the floor above, and, by a turn to the bedrooms in front, forms a wide platform before the library door. This platform, with its railing, then becomes a most interesting feature, altogether charming when several figures are introduced on it — a young mother and children waiting for the guests to ascend from the drawing-room floor to the more informal story above.

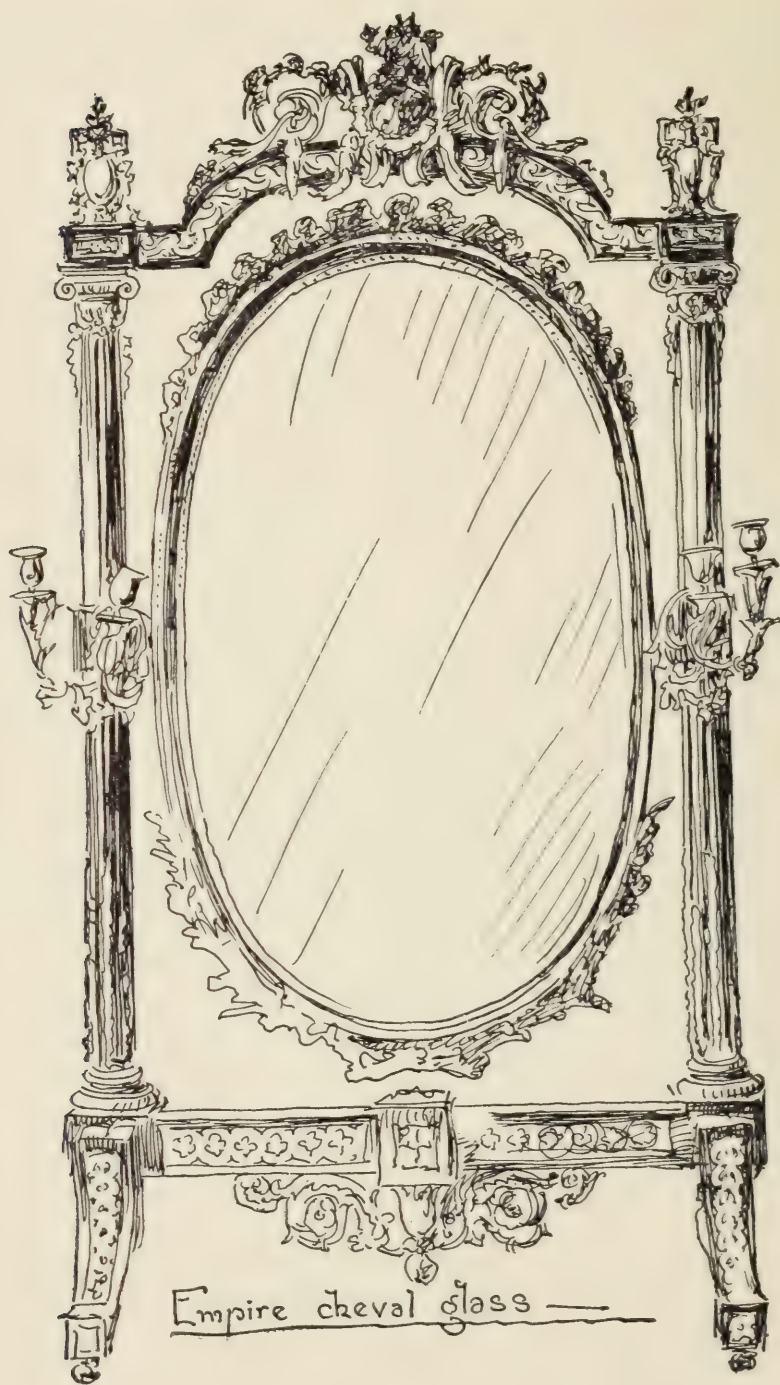
The plan oftenest followed in these days, when a conventional town house is remodelled to give a drawing and dining room on the first floor, is to take away the high stoop, throwing the old vestibule into the new drawing-room, and making the entrance either on the street level, or, by an ascent of a few feet under the old vestibule, finishes the steps in a hall filling the middle part of a house. This hall then becomes large, and in some cases important, the drawing-room in front, the dining-room in the rear. When these alterations have been made, it is customary to give to the drawing-

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room an architectural excellence not common to the old front parlors. The windows, chimney, and doors are carefully designed. The walls are stuccoed, or panelled. The inlay is generally of silk or brocade. All the appointments are studded. The fashion of the day inclines to white or cream paint, soft silks on the walls, with mahogany or French furniture. One room will have cream wood-work, green watered silk in the panels, white or gold chairs covered with silk or brocade. Another will have white walls, white wood-work, the furniture covered with a striped brocade. There is no rule. The general tendency, however, is to avoid overcrowding, and to express simplicity through the medium of the costly and the beautiful. Such a room must not be encumbered with too many articles of a minor interest.

The domestic life of a family is never suggested, although the spirit of its mistress may yet be made to prevail in a hundred ways. She may still express the hospitable intent even while respecting formality ; and she can certainly make you feel her appreciation of grace, of sweetness, and of friendly intercourse, even while





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she is confining herself to appointed places and stated hours for receiving.

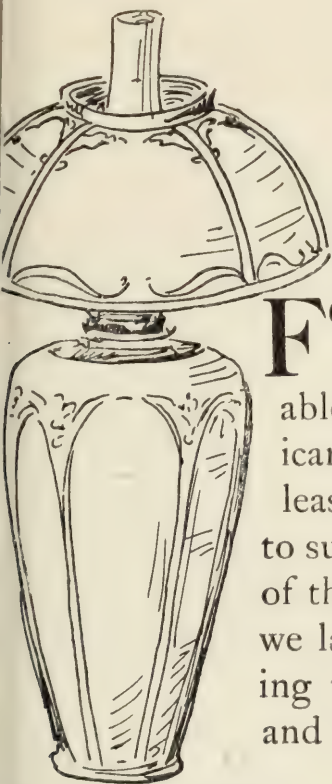
When drawing-rooms of a more elaborate character, or when a series of drawing-rooms of an always increasing splendor, reproducing periods and celebrated interiors, are introduced into a house, it goes without saying that an architect has been or should have been in consultation.

A discussion of detailed appointments proper to these drawing-rooms would carry us altogether beyond the scope of this volume, although in their decoration no one can escape the problems confronting the very humblest of home-loving spinsters in the most modest of parlors. No woman can get away from the question of color. She should always be mistress of a felicitous manner of self-expression. Certainly she can never hope the money she spends will make a successful home if she neglects consideration of the affections, the sentiments, the accomplishments, or the consideration of those needs which spring from the weaknesses and idiosyncrasies of individual anatomies, spineless backs, short legs, weary shoulders, strained optic nerves. Those needs, on the other hand, which can only be supplied by pictures, books, beautiful colors, flowers, and agreeable society.

It is the human touch always which gives value to every form of expression, and in the most sumptuously appointed drawing-rooms of "palatial residences" this touch must be present, or all else fails. The quality of the touch depends upon the

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individual, upon her degree of excellence, her breadth of nature, her fineness of perception, her powers of appreciation, her intellectual endowments. Hang a room with the costliest tapestries, adorn it with the rarest carvings, or fit it with the canvases of the master, it can only fail or win for itself such success as its mistress has in her to accomplish. One woman will know how to draw her sofas up by her fire, and so to lend to her sumptuous interior a touch of intimacy, cordiality, and charm, without which her room might otherwise have been a museum. Another, not knowing how to do this, for all her wealth of belongings, will never be able to make her room seem other than the work of an upholsterer or of a professional designer.



standing lamp. set in a
large jar of the Grueby
variety, green with soft
multi-glaze, and raised
decorations. Shade of
acid green glass, with
metal frame, following the
curve of the jar.

CHAPTER XV

LIBRARIES AND LIVING-ROOMS

FOR some reason, among us libraries and living-rooms seem interchangeable terms. Perhaps because we Americans are really a book-loving, or at least a book-admiring, people, liking to surround ourselves with the evidences of that education upon which as a nation we lay stress, and for which we are willing to make sacrifices. Or perhaps — and this certainly is the reason which controls in our larger houses — because we are almost always hampered by a lack of space in our dwelling-places.

In country houses, the library is often specially designed for books, and beautifully proportioned; but

except among the men and women of wealth in our cities, the library is only an ordinary room in an every-day house, generally that which would otherwise have been the front bedroom. The introduction of bookcases, sofas, and lounging chairs, and sometimes a few alterations, in general, transform it into a library. Occasionally these transfor-

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mations result happily, especially when the hall bedroom and the larger room are thrown together and an angle made. For libraries and living-rooms should have angles and niches, as many "round the corners" as possible, as many nooks and out-of-the-way places. When the plan of a room makes them impossible, the sofas, bookcases, and tables should be arranged to produce them. Recesses are the charm of libraries.

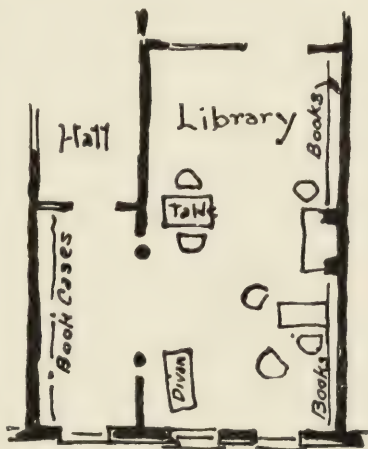
No one, having settled himself with a book, wants to become at once in evidence, compelled on entering a library to join a family group round a centre table or a hearth; to take part in a general conversation, or to seem so rude when declining to, that in self-defence he must carry his book off to his bedroom.

When there is sufficient wealth to make additions possible, care is expended on the mantelpiece, which should be one of dignified proportions, without excessive ornamentation except, perhaps, in the way of carvings. This room, it must be remembered, is potent in its influences upon the young, and the mantelpiece should not be set out with trifles, much as they may be beloved by a family. Let the child have its trifles in its nursery, or some other room. The library or living-room, for all the fun and the merriment which may at times go on in it, must still maintain a certain compelling note. It must possess an elevating character, have power to lift even while it charms. A beautiful plaster cast reproducing some great work of a master; a picture in oil or

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water-color, that has both dignity and importance; photographs of famous portraits and pictures — any of these belong over the mantels of such rooms. If none of these are possible, a wide mirror may be substituted, cut to form an over-mantel, with fresh flowers in front, but never on any account pictures of French milliners, in high heels tripping over the wet pavements of Paris; nor gayly dressed ladies kissing canary birds; nor cheap chromos of St. Cecilia and her roses. Children are not educated by these, nor is one's own mental calibre strengthened. A stranger would know just what books to look for in a library or living-room with pictures like these over the mantel.

Flowered wall-papers, of course, are out of the question; but perhaps a clearer impression may be conveyed



Library

by a description of several of these libraries. In one instance the two front rooms are thrown into one, entrance being had through the smaller room filled with black oak bookcases running to the ceiling and enclosed by glass doors with small leaded diamond panes. The two rooms are divided by columns of black oak with carved capitals. The bookcases in the larger room are but four feet high, giving space above to hang pictures over the dull red paper. The doors leading into the hall and the

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adjoining chambers are of solid black oak, — genuine old pieces like the writing-table and the chairs. The lounging chairs are upholstered in red. The mantel and over-mantel are of deep yellow marble; the fire-irons and fender of bronze. The andirons are low-lions, beautifully modelled, resting their

noses on their paws. The glass of the leaded windows is white. There are no thin curtains; those of a red velvet brocade are drawn at night.

White book-shelves ten feet high finished by a frieze of green and white paper, ceiling and doors of white, a table six feet long in front of the fire-place, a sofa and small reading-table by one window, a lounging chair and

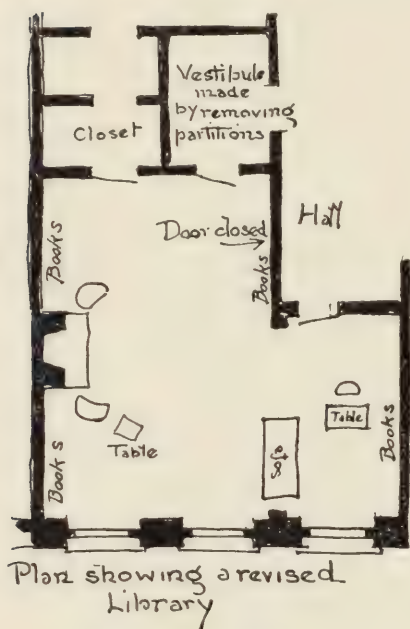


table by the other, make the general plan of another library on the second floor. The windows having large panes and making privacy impossible are curtained with white against the glass, the luxury of uncurtained library windows being out of the question in a city block.

When entrance from the hall is had through the larger room, the smaller one becomes an alcove or recess. The closet holding the basin with hot and cold water is sometimes removed, the space being

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thrown into the hall to form, before the library door, a sort of vestibule in which a piece of furniture is placed. This vestibule adds dignity to an otherwise ugly passage-way. The library then has only two doors, side by side, facing the front windows and divided from each other by a small bookcase. One door leads into the general hall through the tiny antechamber; the other into the sleeping-room at the back. The wood-work, bookcases, and window-curtains are white. The charm of the room lies in the placing of the furniture. At right angles to the middle window (there are three), a large sofa is drawn. This helps to shut off the alcove behind it holding the writing-table, and made beautiful with palms and a rubber tree, the widely branching fern being set on pedestals. The only pictures are prints and photographs from celebrated paintings.

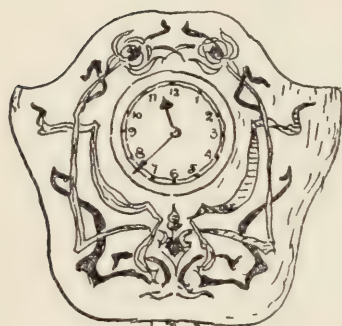
A library with the same ground plan has mahogany doors, bookcases, and furniture. The frieze is of Spanish leather of dull rich tones. The chimney has a small recess just below the shelf for holding a book or two, pipes, and tobacco. A big lounging chair and a table are drawn up by it. Sofas and tables are arranged to make angles and recesses in the room.

The wall color of a library should be subordinate to that of the books, forgotten in their presence. A bright shining red is objectionable. It takes too great possession of a lounge. Personally, I like no color on the walls except that of the bindings; to have my books so arranged that they look me

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straight in the face, as it were. This may be because the library which I remember best in my youth had nothing else in it but books, filling oak shelves so high that they were only stopped by the ceiling; not a space anywhere free of a volume, except just over the mantel, where an engraving hung.

The curtains were of yellow Nankin cotton, toning in with the yellow oak of the shelves and the doors, and bound with a narrow band of Turkey red. How cheerful it all was, how reposeful! That yellow Nankin cotton is never seen any more, and, except on very old books, none of that yellow calf used in bindings, and growing ever



Clock face
carved
and
stained.

more delightful and fragrant with time. I get the comfort of that yellow which I love in a library all of oak, the shelves extending to a beamed oak ceiling, and divided from each other by fluted columns with carved capitals. The lowest shelf is on a level with the hand, the space below being occupied by a series of small closets for holding papers and pamphlets, and so cleverly constructed that it seems only a panelled support for the shelf above. The only picture in the room, a landscape by one of our great painters, is over the mantel, the wood of the over-mantel being specially designed to receive and frame it. The fireplace is of plain dark green tiles, — a green that is low in tone, cool and refreshing in quality. Nothing is allowed on it except one curio of yellow-

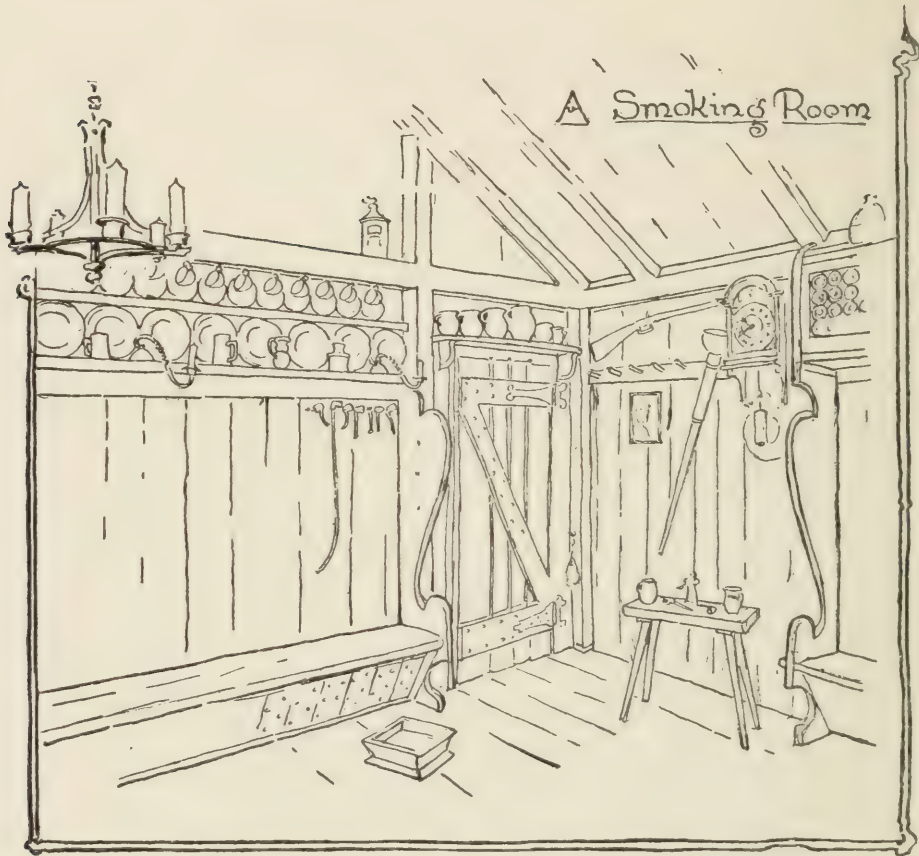
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green and a vase of flowers. The hangings and furniture are of dull reds with dull gold braids taking up the tones of the oak. The table is of old black oak. The charm of the library is irresistible, its dignity compelling.

But for perfect adaptability to family life and happiness, where is there a library or a living-room to equal this one? It is thirty-five by fifty feet. Opposite its wide entrance door is a great bay-window filled with plants. At the end of the room, to the left, is a huge fireplace projecting into the room. Facing it, there is another bay-window with low window-seats filled with cushions. The wood-work and shelves are of black oak. The frieze above is a dull green, with a broken figure. But the indescribable angles and the niches and the deep window recesses; the cushioned seats and the sofas; the places in which twenty people, if you will, can gather together, and the little nooks in which one or two alone can talk in quiet and seclusion! And such places for children to curl up in the corners with their books! And such books, and so many! And such traditions as the room has made for itself! It is one which has kept all of the family together, and gathered to it all the family friends, and made life around its hearth ideal. Children and grandchildren have come back to it, bringing the young husbands and fathers too. It has sheltered them all, and educated them all, and won them all to its sentiments, made them lovers of books and lovers of each other. I think of this room and its in-

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fluence, and what the influence of rooms like it might be, whenever I hear the discontented and the restless murmur over the care of their houses, thinking it must be so much better to write a book or to paint a picture than to furnish a home; or even when I



hear those talk who are not discontented, and whose homes are happy, but who are too modest or too self-depreciating to understand the value of their own labors. For a house, especially if it has in it a room like this one, stands for more than many a

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volume. In reality it is a moral factor in the progress of the time.

Living-rooms and libraries, when they are approached by a descent of several steps, gain an air of distinction. When the steps turn, a small platform is made, protected by a railing sometimes hung with rugs, old silks and embroideries, or left plain, as in the illustration. This particular room is all of gold and green. The wood-work and beams have been stained green. The ceiling is inlaid between the beams with a gold wash, stippled to imitate the tones of a dull law calf. The walls are covered with a dark forest green burlaps. The curtains are of old-gold Venetian brocade. All the furniture is Venetian or Spanish, except the divan. Each article is covered with red or green or dull tones. The carpet is red. This room is in a city block and fills the back yard.

To a library filling one wing of a country house, approach is had by several steps, leading from the old part of the house to the library door. Instead of railings, book-shelves protect these steps on either side, the top shelf supporting a row of flower-pots. The library is of great size and belongs to a man of letters, who permits no overflow from the parlor — nothing but books or pictures of bookmen on his library walls. The wood-work, shelves, and ceiling are of light oak, like the table six feet in diameter placed in the middle of the room. A ruby red hall carpet follows the steps into the room in a sweep of color toward the fireplace opposite the steps. Two

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ample sofas are drawn up at right angles to the hearth, facing each other.

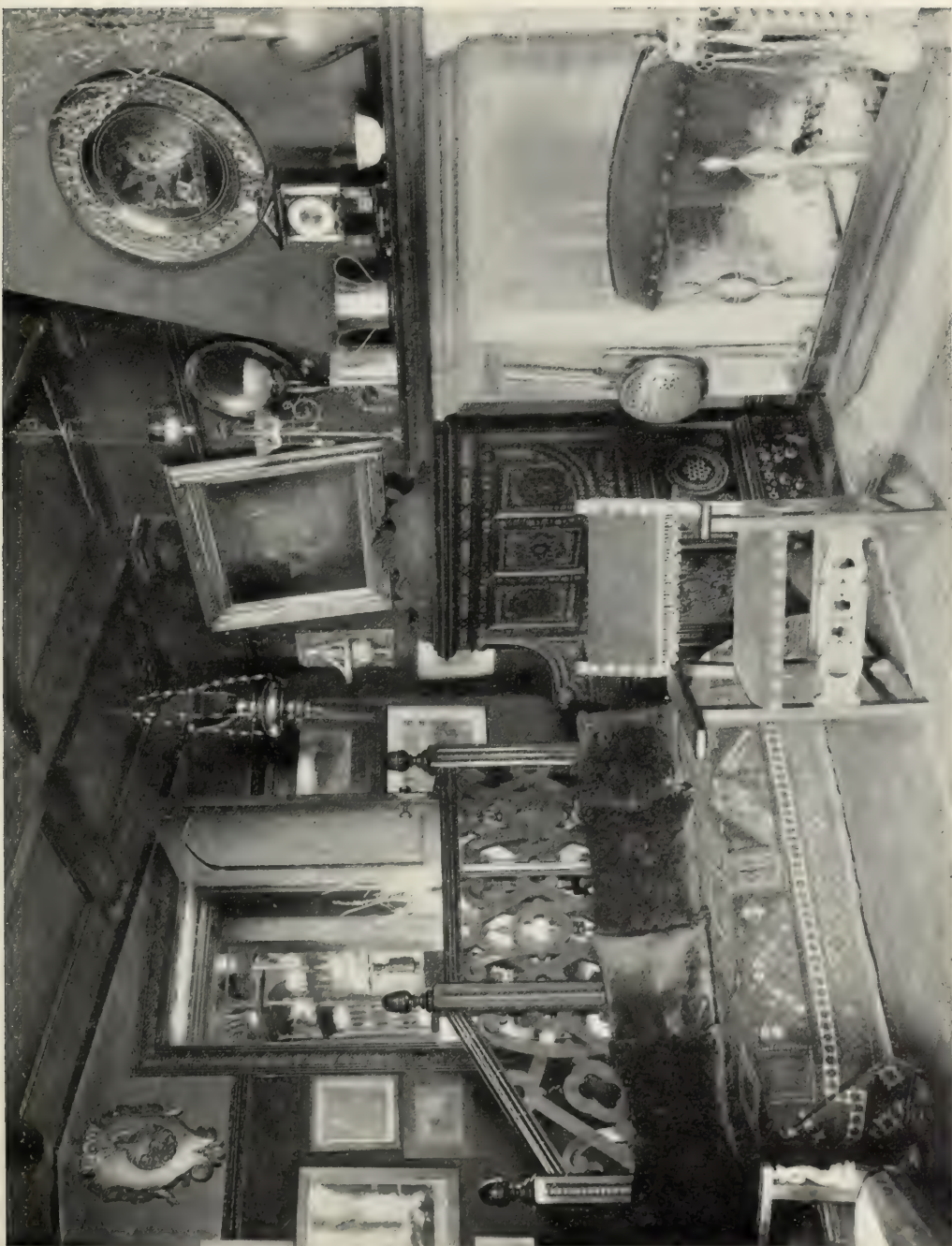
The placing of two sofas on either side of a wide fireplace is a common custom in large libraries and living-rooms. The sofas are long, of course, and low, well upholstered, and always made comfortable with cushions. The back and side pieces are often broad enough to hold books, papers, ash-trays, paper-cutters, or the after-dinner coffee cup. With



Weathered oak divan with seat 30" deep. To place before an open fire, with a long table behind the back

these wide sofas the custom is to place a row of upright cushions flat against the back and covered with a heavy fabric; several soft down cushions, covered with silk, are then added, to indulge the idiosyncrasies of special anatomies.

The sofa is made to face the fire when the room is not large enough for two at right angles to the hearth. A writing-table back of the sofa, with a lamp arranged to give light to those on the sofa and to any one writing at the table, serves to sepa-



“LIVING ROOMS AND LIBRARIES . . . GAIN AN AIR OF DISTINCTION”

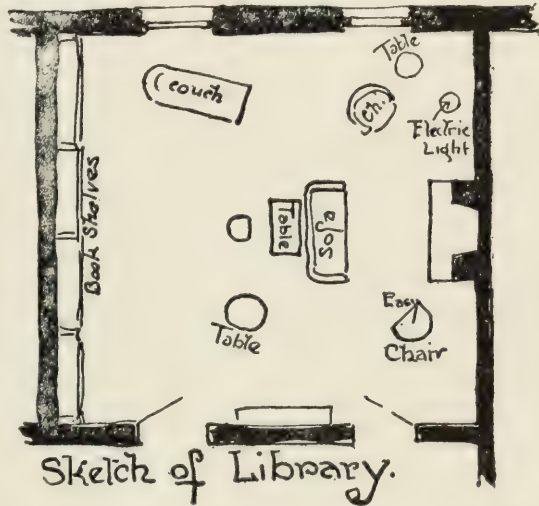
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rate that part of the room devoted to writing from that in which others may be reading.

Provision is made for other loungers by reading-chairs, small tables, and lamps drawn up between the fireplace and the window, while a chair or two on the other side of the chimney makes it possible for the visitor to feel that the seat he has taken is not the special property of a spoiled man or woman made wretched without it. A beautiful old yellow satin damask bound with a blue gimp hangs at the windows of one of these rooms. The walls are a brownish yellow, the book-cases mahogany with glass doors, — genuine old pieces like all the furniture, the mirrors, and quaint silver filling the room. One happy inspiration is found in the adaptation of an old-fashioned toast-rack to a letter-holder on the writing-table.

When a room is small, the writing-table may go at the head of the sofa that faces the fire, but the large chairs and small tables must still be drawn up about the hearth.

A library chair is not comfortable unless it is commodious. I like it provided with cushions. Morocco, corduroy, velours, velveteen, or in splen-



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did libraries velvets and rich damasks, are used as coverings. Old Cathedral chairs, with high backs and carved arms, add to the grandeur of the room.



Clock. Carved
stained brown
scarlet and
green.
The design is
picked out in
gold. The
face is of brass
handsomely
wrought.
This was found
in the atelier
of an artistic
old wood carver,
in Munich.

One library that I haunt has these splendid chairs arranged around a very long room, with huge carved fireplaces at either end, two sofas drawn up by one of them. The book-shelves, extending to the ceiling, are divided half-way by a little gallery. The great oak tables were once the pride of some monastery or baronial hall. A child with a book curled up in one great splendid chair is as comfortable as in the corner of a sofa, and even more picturesque.

I have never seen a library-table that I thought too large, but I have seen many too crowded. The tendency is to put too much on them. If I had my way I should have one that was kept empty most of the time. I remember a rented cottage at the sea-shore, a simple house without pretensions. It had, in the second-story hall, an empty round table at least seven feet in diameter. That table always secured tenants for the house.

A nest of small tables is a delight, giving you an empty table whenever you want it, — for a work-basket, a luncheon-tray, a bunch of flowers,

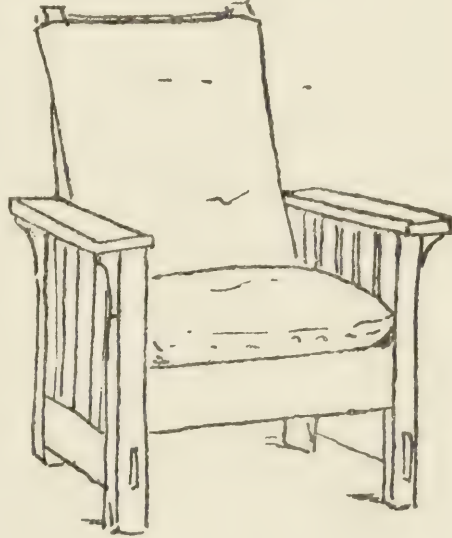


“IT BELONGS TO A BOUDOIR OR STUDY”

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

or the glass of milk to be taken at eleven in the morning.

A desk with a top would quite spoil certain libraries. A desk implies secrets, the possession of papers to be kept under lock and key. It belongs to a boudoir or a study, but not to a general living-room, where possessions are held more or less in common. Desks, once used by kings or magnates of importance, and which, like those shown in the Louvre, are beautiful examples of a distinct and sumptuous period in art, would be beyond the reach of people of moderate means. Their imitations would be reprehensible.



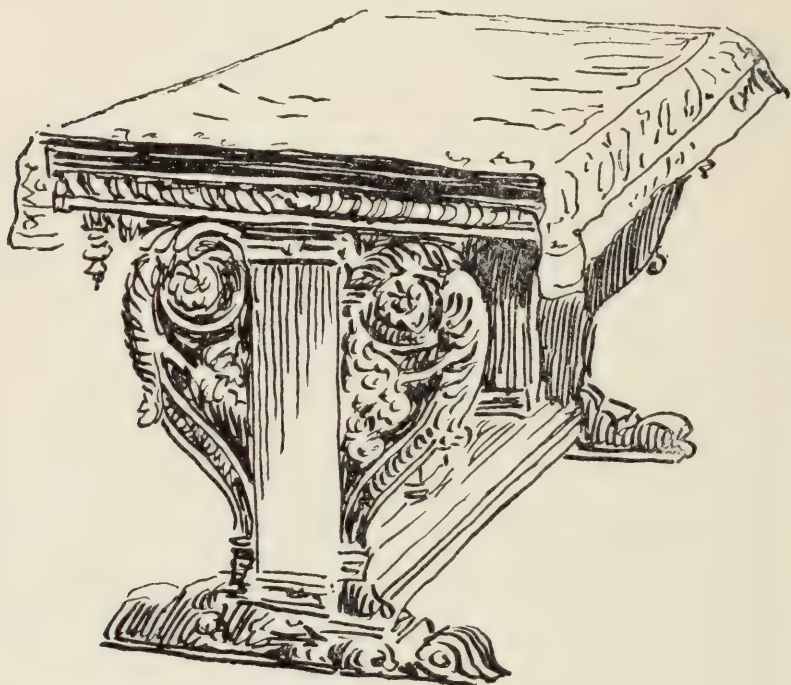
They are, therefore, not to be considered. The mahogany desk, common to New England and the Southern States during the early history of our country,

delightful and much to be desired as they are, adapt themselves to those rooms only in which the rest of the furniture is in harmony. One of them would have ruined the living-room furnished with gorgeous Spanish and Venetian chairs, or the library of black oak and yellow marble chimney-piece

Good example of a Morris chair, made in this country. The proportions are excellent, the frame strongly pinned together.

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Except in small studies, then, or boudoirs, or in bedrooms and morning-rooms combined, or in informal parlors, writing-tables are to be preferred to desks, unless the desk is small and unobtrusive, and can be tucked away in some corner especially devoted to it. Even then it can be admitted only



Italian Table richly carved

on sufferance. When a writing-table has drawers on either side, certain private papers may be put out of harm's way. These tables, often beautiful in design and proportion, with carved legs or inlaid surfaces, are great additions to a library or a living-room, possessing a charm and a character of their own. They become distinctive features in the

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work-rooms of men of studious or thoughtful habit. Indeed, except for the fireplace, there is nothing like the writing-table to lend a library its excellence and quality.

Within the last few years a small table has been invented for holding papers, pamphlets, or account-books. When placed by the larger one it proves of exceptional service. It is made of inlaid mahogany and stands on four slim legs. The top is not more than a foot in diameter and has three, and sometimes four, upright pieces (also of mahogany and inlaid) arranged like the silver pieces of a toast-rack.

A separate table or corner should be reserved in every living-room for the periodicals. Wide pigeon-holes made without tops are sometimes built over a corner table; or a long, narrow table is spread with periodicals, not piled on one another, but laid in lines, so that the titles and dates are recognized at a glance.

In some of the more beautifully appointed libraries, where the bindings of the books are of special excellence, representing the work of men famous in their craft, the doors and the shelves of bookcases are of glass. A bevelled glass is used for the shelves, enabling you to look through at the books and their bindings below without touching them.

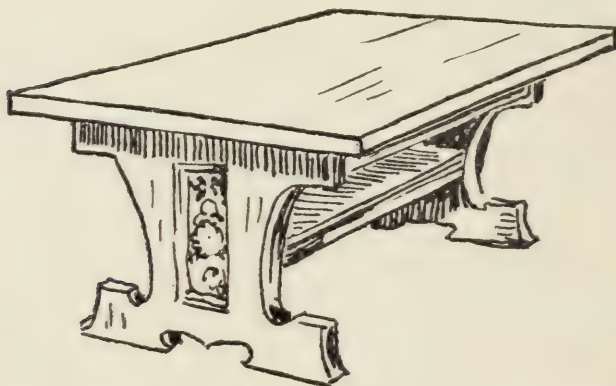
The doors of mahogany bookcases always show some design in wood over the glass. An artist will make his own design for the lead; weave the monogram of wife or children, or the dates of family

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anniversaries, in the lead, making special doors memorial tablets to different members of his family. The work must be well done, never obvious nor obtrusive, else its value is destroyed. When well carried out the result is most interesting, giving to the library the air of a well-studied plan.

Books are the important features of a shelf, and I never object to one of pine or whitewood when painted, stained, or treated with oil. A little grooving on the edge gives the shelf a greater finish.

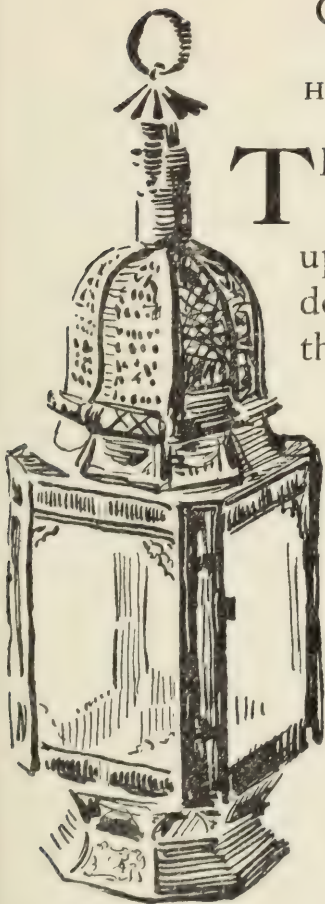
A carpenter can do all the work. When a new set of books is to be provided for, you have only to give him a volume to measure by. A piece of leather nailed on the edge of one shelf protects from dust those that are on the shelf below.



Large Table for Library - of heavy oak.
fumed and stained brown. Ends carved

CHAPTER XVI

HALLS : APARTMENTS



THERE are two kinds of halls which we in this day are called upon to consider. The architect designs one ; the builder constructs the other.

When a hall is to be treated we must know whether it is a harmonious composition, or whether it is an ugly passage-way to be beautified if possible ; but the problem of its decoration can never be solved until certain questions are answered. Where does the hall run from, and where does it lead ? Is it only the bare passage-way of an ordinary house in town, the

stairs facing the front door ? Or is it the hall of an apartment, without windows, and having no steps ? Does it open on a village street or on well-kept lawns ? Has it a pleasant vista ? What rooms open from it ? Or, has the purpose of its owner been to make it a lounging place for his friends and his family ? If this has been his object, has he

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provided his house with other passage-ways and entrances, protecting the inmates of the hall from the casual visitor in town, and from the pedler in a country place?

The subject is one of no little importance. Like his speech, a man's hall betrays his place in life, and you see it the moment that his front door is opened. It stamps him as does his greeting. A man who does not know how to address a stranger, who is ungrammatical and awkward, cannot pretend to you that he has been born and bred among those who have been accustomed to the world, and that at another time he will prove it to you. His first words have already convinced you, and no elaborately prepared after-speeches will better his case. He whose hall is vulgar with inappropriate belongings, made pretentious by mere display, or in which the stranger is too quickly admitted into the intimacies of family life, cannot be more successful in persuading you that the rest of his house is as it should be, or that the secret of polite living is his.

When a woman can design her own hall as a medium of expression for herself, she is to be counted happy. The majority of us must content ourselves with those which the builder has erected for our particular pain and discomfiture. And of all those with which he has afflicted us, certainly there is none quite so hopeless as that found in an every-day apartment, a passage-way so ugly that it has been made the subject of endless newspaper pleasantries.

In Mr. Howells's "*A Hazard of New Fortunes*,"



“THE MAJORITY OF US MUST CONTENT OURSELVES WITH THOSE
WHICH THE BUILDER HAS ERECTED”

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Mrs. March, tired out with trying to find a pretty apartment in New York, dreams at night of "a hideous thing with two square eyes and a series of sections growing darker, then lighter, till the tail of the monstrous articulate was quite luminous again." The every-day flat almost always has the light parlor in the front, and the light kitchen or bedroom in the back, the rest, as Mr. Howells describes it, "crooked and cornered backward through increasing, then decreasing, darkness." This is the apartment advertised as "seven rooms and a bath," and the hall, which is seldom more than three feet wide, is the twisted spinal column, as it were, holding the "monstrous articulate" together.

In apartments which rent for sixteen and eighteen hundred dollars a year, the builder now and then has shown some ingenuity in introducing a small vestibule just inside the front door, but even in that case he has been forced to make a long passage-way of the hall leading past the bedrooms. In a few instances only has he been clever enough to so arrange his hall space that when the front door is opened, a pretty vista is seen leading into one or more rooms at the end. It is not until the seven or eight thousand dollars a year apartment is reached that the hall becomes large enough for any architectural effects, for wide marble steps, columns, and balconies.

Like everything else in a small apartment, a hall should be treated with care and thought. This is imperative, not only because its configuration is apt to be bad, but because it forms the one general pas-

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

sage-way on which the parlor, dining-room, and bedrooms open. You must go through it to reach your kitchen and bathroom, and each of your visitors must be ushered into the parlor by way of it.

Because of these visitors, then, your hall, if you live in an apartment, must suggest no compromises, betray no careless intrusions from the bedroom or the storeroom. It must never look like the hall on the bedroom floor of a house. Although you may line it with books, and treat it with a certain informality, you can never regard it except as a passage-way, always ready for the reception of the most punctilious of your guests.

A hall begins with the front door. It is to be studied first from this point. Properly speaking, there should be just inside the entrance a table, a seat, a tray for cards, a pencil and pad, and a place for men's overcoats. The comfort and convenience of every arrival should be studied. The messenger boy should have a seat while he waits; so should the old lady who stops to have her overshoes removed. But an apartment seldom boasts sufficient space for the necessary comforts. The front door will sometimes open directly on a blank wall, and must be closed again, the visitor safe inside, before either the maid or the guest can move in a given direction. Nothing is so awkward, and, unhappily, nothing is more general.

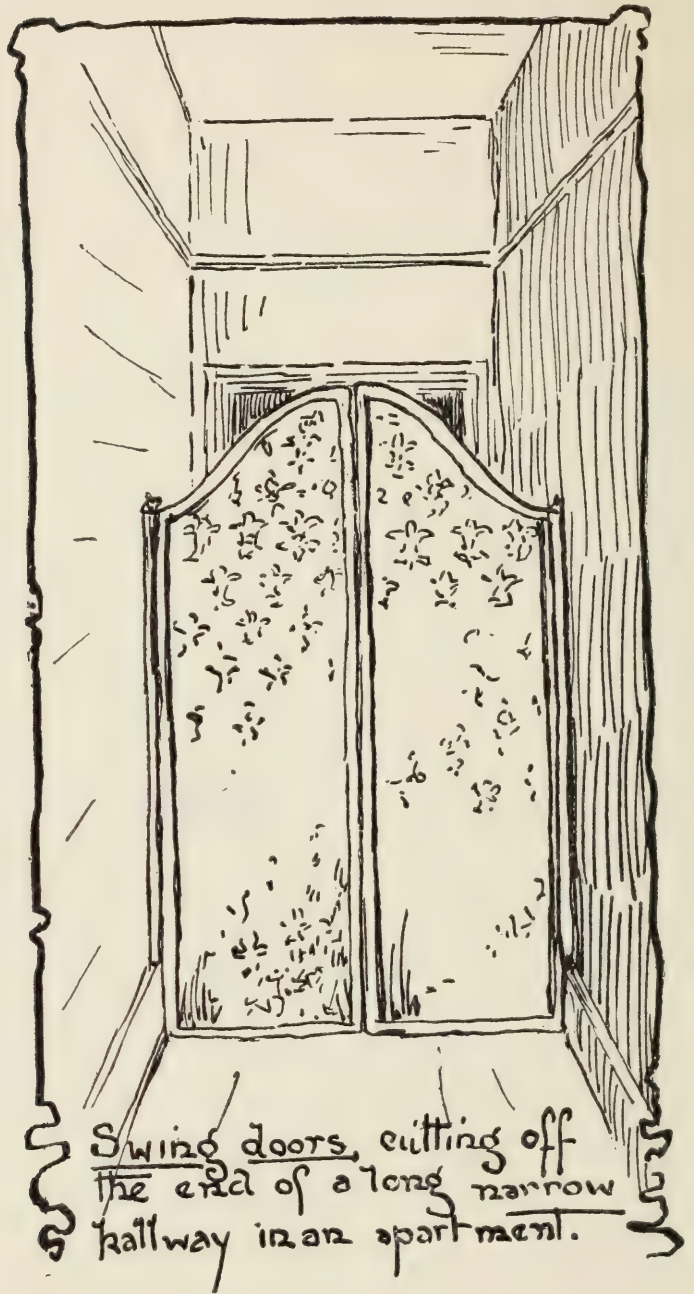
When there is not sufficient space for the chair inside, one should be placed on the stair-landing

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outside, for the benefit of the breathless visitor who may have had to puff a way up three or four flights of stairs. On the blank wall opposite the door, a mirror would seem better than a picture. It would prove the most flattering of tributes to the excellence of one's guests. Looking-glasses make the vainest of men and women feel at home at once.

The proportions of the mirror must depend upon the dimensions of the hall and the door. It may be oblong, oval, or square. A narrow shelf under the glass could hold the tray for cards, and the clothes-brush, were its design good, and certainly a flower or two, and if the hall were dark, a pair of candlesticks with glass globes to protect the flames from the wind. Were the shelf too narrow for the candlesticks, a pair of brass sconces or candle brackets, fastened to the wall on either side of the looking-glass, would be even more effective. To make the composition better, a plaster cast, toned to a good ivory, could be placed above the mirror. Somewhere between the mirror and the parlor door, however, place must be found for a tree on which hats and overcoats could be hung.

When the door of an apartment opens at the end of a long hall, the whole scheme of decoration must be altered, for in that case there may be too much instead of too little for the visitor to see. Then your object should be to protect yourself, to insure your family a certain privacy, and to do this without shutting all the doors, rendering your hall impenetrable in its gloom.



Swing doors, cutting off
the end of a long narrow
hallway in an apartment.

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This purpose may be accomplished in several ways. A portière hung from a swinging crane of wood or iron is often used. When privacy is desired, the curtain is swung forward. When a freer passage-way is needed, it is pushed back against the wall. The most conventional plan is to fasten a pole across the hall with heavy curtains on rings, to fall straight or be looped back. A shelf six or eight inches wide, holding bits of pottery or brass, when introduced with discretion over the curtain rod, adds an interesting feature to the hall.

The quality of the draperies must depend upon the nature of the surroundings. Tapestry, velvet, corduroy, silk, velours, denim, cotton, taffeta, mercerized cotton, armure, damask, cretonne, or embroidered materials are proper, but no textile should be used which would create a stuffy impression. It is better to have the curtain specially made. A good pair of ready-made curtains is only found occasionally. Never be tempted to purchase cheap chenille curtains with fringe and border. There is a thin Japanese pink gauze of soft and delicate tones, covered with painted flowers or figures, which, while screening the hall, does not darken it.

I like a table in front of the hall curtain when there is sufficient space. A row of cathedral lamps suspended from the ceiling, while monopolizing none of the valuable floor area, is a delightful addition to an otherwise uninteresting interior.

It is well to remember that curtains are always of value in small places, because they never betray the

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

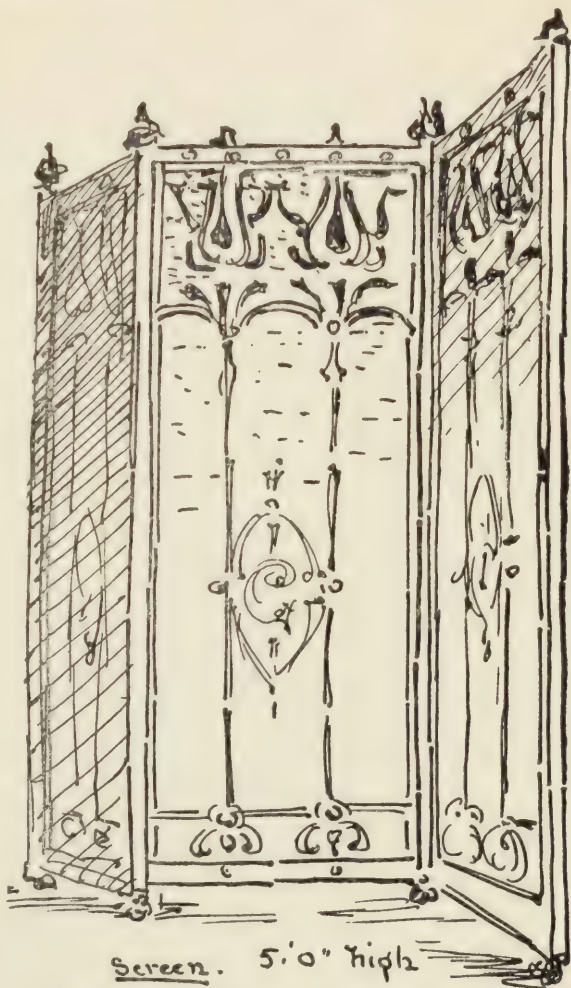
exact size of any little room. In decorating the long, narrow, windowless halls of apartments, both curtains and mirrors are of inestimable service. Those who work with them must do so with a twofold object in view—that of suggesting both breadth and mystery—of there being something behind the curtain. Another room, perhaps! As if there were ever any other undiscovered room in any apartment! The casual visitor, however, who has come from a house, will never know that.

Long, narrow halls may be partitioned off by screen doors, which any carpenter can construct. They should be modelled after those seen in Spain and Cuba, which are curved or painted at the top, six or seven feet in height, leaving a wide-open space between the top of the door and the high ceiling for a free circulation of air. These doors are in two flaps, each half door being hung to the wall by spring hinges. A slight pressure of the hand is enough to separate them when you enter. They may be made of ordinary pine, covered with a textile. Nothing is better for the purpose than the tapestry of commerce tacked on the door and finished with a gimp put on with invisible tacks. A denim, leather, or velveteen with brass-headed tacks, would also be effective. Everything depends upon the environment. In a large studio-apartment, where tapestry was used, a most agreeable impression has been produced. The door which it covers not only protects the room at the end of the line, but forms a vestibule just inside the front door.

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Whether curtains or doors or screens are used, the question of what is to be seen at the end of your vista should never be neglected. On no account should a bed be permitted to show from a front door, else you might as well model your home after a hospital or a soldiers' barracks, where the regulations require that beds should be always in evidence. If necessity compels you to use the room at the end of the line as a sleeping apartment, and to place the bed where, unless protected, it would be seen, then a screen at the front of the bed is an absolute necessity. A view of the bed is never permissible, except during some festivity, perhaps, when the bedroom is used as a ladies' cloak-room.

Neither a bureau nor a dressing-table should be put at the end of a line of vision. They would suggest uses where privacy was peremptory. A chair or a table would be excusable, although it



Frame painted green, covered with undyed burlaps, stencilled in green and gold.

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must be remembered that nothing in a house or an apartment, nor in any place known as a home, should be so arranged as to suggest the fact of one's being perpetually in evidence. In a house one does not sit to be observed, but to be friendly, and to escape observation.

If the room at the end of the hall be a parlor, and a sofa or divan must be placed in a conspicuous position, something should be done to protect the occupants from the gaze of the people to whom a front door has just been opened. A table with lamp or ferns could then be placed at the foot of the sofa. In one of the illustrations it will be seen that a tall carved Japanese wooden pedestal has been used, surmounted by a cathedral candlestick and candle. When a vase with tulips or roses is set on this pedestal (and this particular householder is never without such a vase of flowers), absolute privacy is insured, and without the purpose of the mistress being made too apparent. In the other apartment-house parlor, a table with ferns or palms or a lamp accomplishes the same results. In some environments, as in studios, a chest of drawers or a bookcase is effective at the foot of the divan.

Upon the size and configuration of the hall must depend the nature of its wall covering. Its color depends upon that of the rooms to which the hall gives access. No one, for instance, would want to walk from a flaming red hall into a maroon parlor. A hall, of course, for all its reserve, should express a certain welcome, but it should, like a well-trained

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

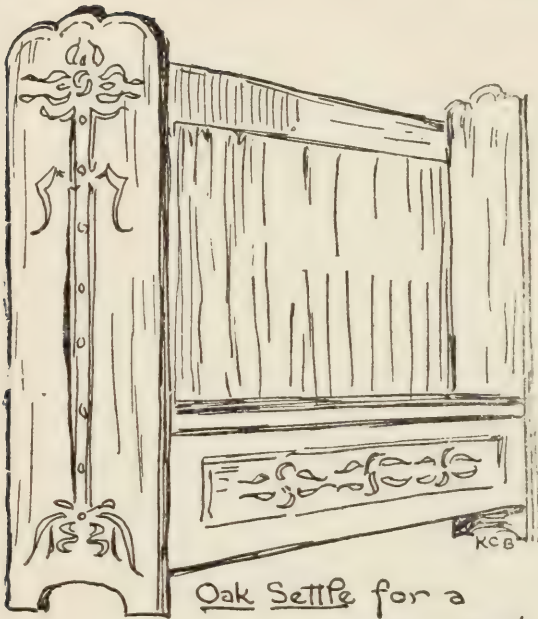
messenger, make itself forgotten as it points a way to pleasures beyond. Its manner must be agreeable but restrained. The more inconspicuous its walls the better, although yellow in certain small vestibules and passage-ways has a most cheering effect upon the visitor. Like the neat cap and uniform of the maid who opens the door, the yellow of the vestibule conveys an assurance of all being bright and orderly and unencumbered within. Red with white wood-work makes a cheerful hall, and when relieved by sconces, brass frames, and mirrors, suggests a warm and comfortable interior. Dull golds and greens, gray and silver greens, Japanese papers of rich warm colors, are most interesting and throw into pleasant relief the plaster casts, the pottery, the pieces of furniture with which the hall may be filled.

A dado of dark burlaps or velours put on with a gimp or bordered with a moulding, and supporting a lighter tint above, helps to give to the longest and barest halls a certain finished air. When such a dado is used, it must not be more than three to three and one-half feet high, and if the hall be small and the adjoining rooms permit the treatment, a flowered paper may in some cases be used. It all "depends," as does everything else in life.

For instance, in a long and narrow hall, a flowered or figured paper, that went on endlessly repeating itself, would be wearisome beyond belief, like a tiresome talker who would never be still. On the other hand, such a long hall treated with a plain tone unbroken by any figure would suggest the

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dreary monotony of a penitentiary. Lined only with pictures, it would remind one of a museum, and a badly planned museum at that, since there would never be space enough for two people to stand and look at the pictures together, nor for one to get close enough against the wall behind him to look at the pictures on the opposite wall. The study of



Oak Settle for a
narrow hall

the tenant must be to break up the lines. This can be done with the curtains, mirrors, doors, and hanging lamps to which reference has been made.

A mirror is urged at the end of a long narrow hall which makes a sudden turn to reach a room beyond, but not a mirror which deceives the person advancing towards it, beguiling him into bumps and apologies. Mirrors

like these do well enough in hotels and railway stations, where the laughable mistakes they entail may be found amusing by the impolite observer; but they are vulgar in houses. Anything is vulgar in a house which constantly makes another ill at ease and awkward, and for which perpetual explanations and apologies are necessary. A suitable mirror for the blank wall at the end of a long hall which turns must not run to the floor, or be made to seem like

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an opening in the wall. It must hang on a level with the eye, be furnished with a shelf underneath, the shelf to be set with flowers and candlesticks. The idea is merely to make the end of the visual line agreeable by providing a pleasant composition. A picture over the shelf might take the place of the mirror if the candlesticks were omitted, otherwise the effect would be that of an altar in a long, narrow chapel.

When a door comes at the end of a long hall, it can often be made interesting with a picture, but without the shelf. When doors are ugly, they are often curtained, but never if the effect produced is heavy and the atmosphere made close and oppressive.

The hall chair and table should be of dignified proportions and without upholstery. Easy-chairs have no place in apartment halls. It is not always possible, however, to keep the appointments of these halls as one would have them. The makeshifts and the compromises must enter in continually, and although they should never include tables covered with fringed wools (a cover of silk, linen, or cotton fitting at the top is not to be confused with that which is to be excluded), these makeshifts may include various provisions made by a carpenter. He can, for less than five dollars, construct a comfortable bench with a shelf above, using ordinary pine, oiling or staining it walnut. The seat may be only a heavy board about twelve inches wide, supported by two upright pieces let into the top, like those seen in the Dutch kitchen. Above the bench,

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high enough to escape the head of the sitter, yet not too high for the housemaid's reach, would then come the shelf for the card-tray.

Another substitute for the chair and the table may be found in the cheap pine settle used in kitchens. It has a back that swings forward and forms an ironing-table. A young artist of my acquaintance has one of these settles in her studio. It cost her less than four dollars. She oiled it well with linseed oil, and waxed and rubbed it until the wood took on the soft dark brown of old oak. At either end a design was burned in, and around the top of the table this inscription from the lectures of a famous Frenchman: "Une forme doit être belle en elle-même, et on ne peut jamais compter sur le décor appliqué pour en sauver les imperfections," which, roughly translated, means that a form should be beautiful in itself, and that no one should depend upon pure decoration to make an ugly thing beautiful, — a maxim well to remember in whatever we undertake, either in the way of building houses or of dressing ourselves.

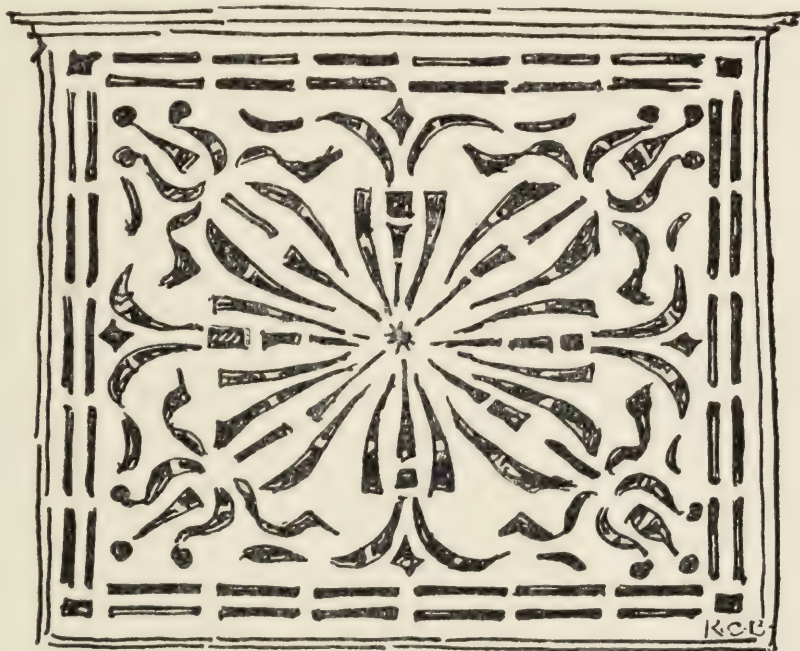
A pine settle, then, may be so treated as to be an interesting object in a hall. With a cushion it makes a comfortable resting place for the messenger or the maid who arrives with a note to be answered. It is infinitely to be preferred as a catch-all for overcoats to the common oak hat-racks with mirrors and hooks, or the oak tables, or any of the cheap manufactured monstrosities which have so long afflicted us.

These settles, by the way, can be burned with a

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design stained in gay colors and elaborated into pieces of furniture decorative in themselves.

When there is a steam heater the struggle should be to conceal it. In the new and beautifully appointed houses, the radiator is covered by an open-work metal case, often very beautiful in detail and



Perforated brass cover for a
steam radiator.

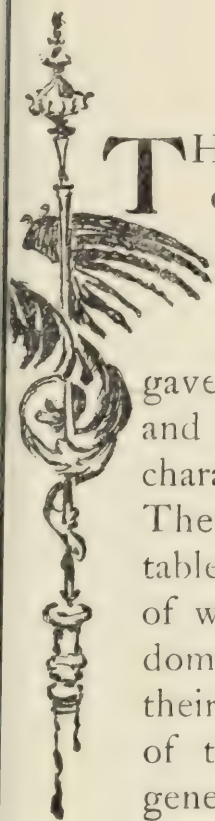
proportion; but in a cheap apartment such a possession is never to be hoped for. There is a curtain made of a metal netting inlaid with small glass bull's-eyes designed and manufactured by artists of note; but this, too, is beyond the reach of ordinary incomes. It is better to use unpretentious pine, to have the carpenter build a shelf or two over the

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radiator, and to set them out with books or brass. When the shelf is not possible a simple piece of stuff thrown over the radiator answers every purpose. In the illustration, a steam heater standing in a dark corner has been covered with a stuff of low tone, so as not to accentuate its presence. A Holland milk-can, filled with water to moisten the air, stands on top of the radiator. A good piece of pottery would have done as well. In the hall shown in the picture, the brass of the can has been repeated in that of the lantern hanging near by, the lantern like the milk-can, serving a definite purpose — that of lighting a dark corner. The fact that these pieces of brass serve purposes of utility must not be forgotten. The uses of things should never be ignored.

CHAPTER XVII

HALLS: HOUSES



The Light-Fixture.
in Berlin.

THE halls of many old-fashioned houses of New England ran in a straight line through the middle of the house, with a door at either end. The back door, when opened and thrown back, gave charming glimpses of green bushes and flower-beds. Great dignity and repose characterized most of these passage-ways. The substantial was never neglected. The tables and the chairs were of the best, always of wood, often beautifully carved, and seldom failing to look as though they held their respective places from the beginning of things, unmoved by the flight of new generations past them. When the stairs

turned, as they do in Mr. Longfellow's house in Cambridge, a tall clock was

placed on the landing, so as to be

seen by those up stairs as well as down. Nothing as easily upset as a lamp on a slim pedestal could have been substituted for it, nor anything as meaningless as a bust on an ill-balanced stand which a

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

whisk of a petticoat would have upset. A bust worthy of a place on a pedestal is worthy of being placed out of harm's way. Now and then a window at the head of the stairs was filled with flowers.

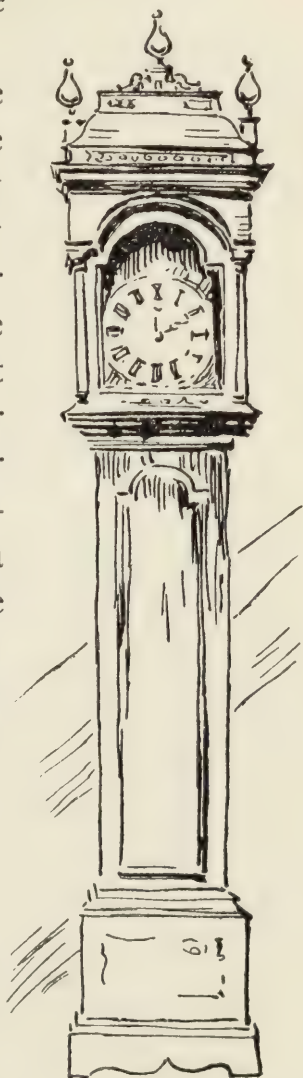
In considering, then, the halls of conventional town houses and those in old-fashioned dwellings, which are in reality nothing more than passageways, pure and simple, furnished with doors opening directly in front of an ascending flight of stairs, we can hardly do better than revert to the example of our forefathers, remembering that whatever their aim they succeeded in expressing it with dignity and repose. We of to-day may be as successful. It all depends upon our possession of sympathy and taste, our quickness in appreciating the needs of others, and the readiness to provide for them with felicity. No preparation should obtrude itself; the general make-up of the hall, like the dress of a well-appointed woman, should be so perfect in all its details that utility is forgotten in the grace and beauty of the whole. This should hold good of every hall, whatever the shape or the special architectural features; whether in a house or an apartment, or whether it is represented only by a tiny ante-chamber opening from a studio. To repeat: a hall to which casual visitors are admitted, whatever the size or wherever the house, should respect the utilities, pay observance to every need, but it should do so with grace and tact. Nothing of a tawdry character should be admitted; nothing suggesting the domestic relations. The employment of beautiful

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

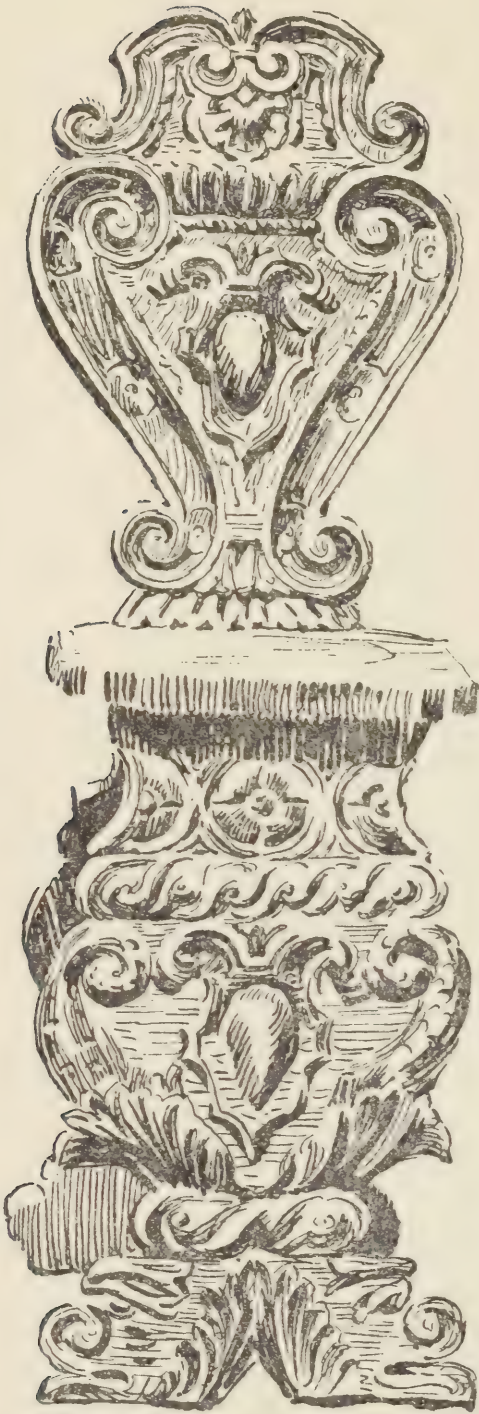
objects is always to be urged; but it must be remembered that either the inappropriate or the meretricious, when falsely used, will rob of all its charm that which might otherwise be beautiful.

A bench may take the place of the hall chair; elaborate oak carvings be substituted for mahogany; stone may be used instead of wood; a card-tray may be of copper, fine porphyry, or simple lacquer. The hall, too, may be of costly marbles or simple pine; but unless there be dressing-rooms near by, like those built in some of our largest houses, where wraps and overcoats are removed for a dinner or a ball, some preparation must be made for the visitor's comfort. In the table drawer of the smallest hall, as in the dressing-rooms of magnificent houses, there should be a clothes-brush, some black and white pins, and a fresh paper of hairpins, and a hatpin or two, so that the maid need not run upstairs when a guest arriving, even for an afternoon visit, finds herself blown to pieces by the wind and in need of a little assistance.

The hats and coats of gentlemen may be laid by the butler on the hall table or carved bench. An old-fashioned hat-rack is no



English Clock 1740



Florentine Chair.
Richly carved oak.

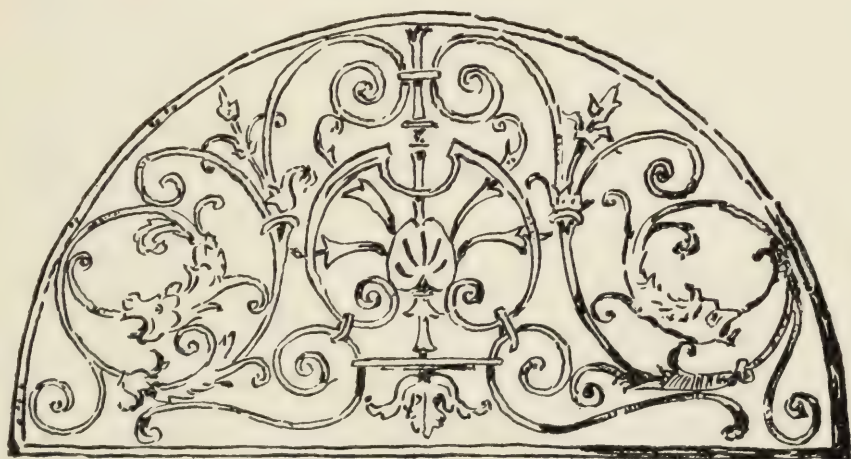
longer possible, neither is one of newer manufacture set out with mirrors and brass hooks. In the high-stoop houses of town the hall-space back of the stairs is now reserved for the hats and wraps of dinner guests wishing to be spared a journey upstairs. It is furnished with a mirror, sometimes running to the floor, sometimes placed over bench or chair. A tree is provided for the wraps.

Unless a staircase is enclosed, shutting off one floor from the other, the wall-paper of the lower floor should be continued to the roof. Few things are so hopelessly ugly as a paper that stops on the bedroom floor, to be patched out there by one of a cheaper grade or another color.

In choosing the color, regard must be had for the light, the direction from which it comes; whether the sunlight enters, or only a flash of semi-darkness out

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of a vestibule when the street door is opened. Regard must also be had, not only for the neighborhood outside, the fact of your having to enter from brick pavements or green fields, but for the prevailing color of the other rooms, on one or both sides of the hall. With rooms on either side, the color, as you look, should present easy and graceful transitions, not a series of shocks and unpleasant impressions.



Old Grille, Paris

Were a hall, for instance, covered with a maroon paper showing gilt figures (a wall-covering, unhappily enough, not uncommon in cheap houses made ready to rent), and were the dining-room on one side to be covered with blue paper having gilt stripes (I have seen them like this), and the parlor on the other side with a red-flowered paper; and were any one entering the front door able to see all these at once, what would be the condition of sensi-

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tive nerves? what the state of those obliged to live with these combinations of color?

Papers pretty in themselves may not "tone" when seen in relation to each other. From a seat in the green and white living-room, in one country house, you could look through a green hall to a green dining-room on the other side. The last green, that of the dining-room, was a different shade, throwing the hall and the rest of the house out of key and spoiling everything. From the dining-room door, on the other hand, you had only a charming vista, because the greens of the hall and of the living-room blended delightfully.

After a color has been chosen; that of the design must arise. A long narrow hall wants neither a large figure nor a perfectly plain surface. A small broken, unobtrusive figure, just large enough to give a feeling of quality, without over-accentuating the outline, is best. A burlaps may be plain, however, and a plaster that is rough may be painted with a solid tone, because in both these instances the surfaces are uneven, and take up the light in another way. Personally, I dislike the roughened plaster when painted, possibly because it is so seldom well done, the average painter understanding nothing of color. The manufacturer of a good burlaps, on the other hand, has had an expert at work on his colors, producing better results.

A wainscoting of wood improves these halls, or a dado of burlaps on which a figure has been stencilled, not printed, and above which a border of

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wood is shown. An Indian or Japanese matting may be used instead of burlaps. Textiles of finer quality, which are appropriate in drawing-rooms and parlors, are out of key in a hall, where the formal and enduring should alone be expressed.

The hall floors of rented houses are often of common wood, in too bad a state of repair to stain and cover with rugs. A carpet is necessary, although in a hall where young children run in or out from wet or muddy pavements, a carpet is not to be thought of, unless it can be shaken once a week at least. Nothing makes a house so objectionable as a well-trodden floor-covering seldom aired. Halls should be scrubbed at frequent intervals, and when in country places a bare floor of wood or marble is not possible, oil-cloth should be used, darker in tone than the walls, and unobtrusive in color. Large patterns, squares, and all designs imitating marble, are to be avoided. With oil-cloth or linoleum, uncarpeted stairs are to be recommended, if the condition of the wood renders this possible. It must be remembered that by their straight ascent, stairs present a surface which you regard more or less as you do your walls. Standing at your front door or in your hall, you do not look down on your stair-covering as you do on your floor. You face it. Your endeavor must therefore be to keep to low tones, to plain surfaces or unobtrusive figures harmonizing with the walls. An up and down staircase has no architectural values to be respected, no curving lines of beauty, no proportions meant

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to satisfy the eye. Unlike a grand staircase, it lends itself to no pictures, no charming compositions made by men and by women in sumptuous toilettes descending into spacious halls. Elaborate decorations of the staircase are not possible, as when



palms are put on wide marble steps, after the fashion prevailing in palaces.

One sees, in many of the houses of to-day, and always in those of artists, a fashion which has long prevailed in museums — that of lining the wall at the side of the stairs with pictures. Not with one's Van Dycks, nor one's Rembrandts, not even with

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one's best water-colors, but with interesting etchings, photographs, and engravings. The idea is, while providing a passage-way in and out and up and down a house, for the benefit of the inmates, to make that passage-way pleasant as well. These pictures take the places of those superb tapestries, bronzes, marbles, and plasters which are used in the halls and about the stairways of imposing dwellings. A distinctive touch may be added to one's own more modest stairway by a bit of brass on the newel post.

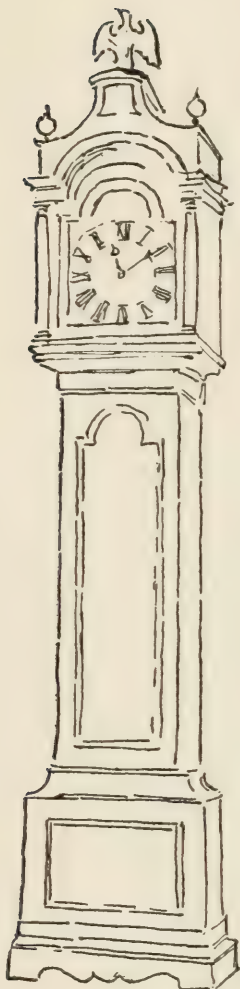
The pictures placed along the stairs are often made to express a special line of interest. A clever man made a bare hall interesting by photographs of distinguished men and women. Inscriptions, by the originals, gave the portraits more than a fleeting interest, making them worthy of being framed and given so conspicuous a place. An artist will choose a series of etchings, or engravings, or reproductions of Raphael's cartoons, Botticelli angels, or Braun's photographs of the Van Dycks and Rembrandts. A lover of horses lines his stairs with fine old sporting prints.

The stairs facing the front door are sometimes turned half-way down their flight, bringing the bottom step by the pantry instead of the street door. This arrangement, admirable in case of no back stairs for the maids, not only insures more privacy to the inmates of the house, but makes the hall itself more interesting. The turn of the steps, forming a platform protected by a railing of carved wood, may be

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hung with rugs or bits of tapestry, and made delightful with cathedral lamps. The curtains falling from under the platform cover two openings, — one leading into a coat-closet under the stairs, the other into the passage-way. The pantry door,

when of glass, must, of course, be treated with a curtain or leaded panes, and the lights carefully arranged, and some note of importance added by a plaster cast or a mirror. Growing plants, suggesting in such a place a sure demise, would be objectionable to any lover of plants or flowers. I would not protest against the use of artificial plants except that I know what a temptation they are to people, who will even put them in the halls of their country houses, and this when the gardens are abloom with flowers. Happily I do not know their owners. We would never be able to agree.



A vestibule should be even more formal in character than a hall. It is meant in these days merely as a protection from the weather, answering the purpose of old-fashioned storm-doors seen in many country houses. Unless left open, it becomes intolerably close, unbearable to

the visitor shut inside by the spring of the outside door. The vestibules of new houses are larger and the atmosphere less depressing. But whatever the size and however beautiful the marbles employed, it

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preserves the same formality. It may have its steps lined with evergreens, but with nothing else of a portable nature. Like the storm-door to which reference has been made, this vestibule is only intended for protection from the elements, and beautiful as it may be in detail, it is false to its spirit when this formal character is sacrificed.

According to a present fashion, the doors of the new vestibules are of glass, protected on one side by an iron grating, on the other by a hanging of velvet or silk. The outer or street door has, in many cases, the glass and iron only, giving a view of the marble vestibule within, with the marble steps leading up to the inner glass door, which is protected by the velvet hanging.

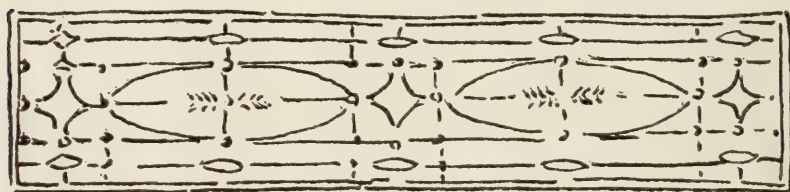
A small vestibule leading to an ordinary town or country house is interesting when treated with a panelling of wood. When the wood-work inside is white, white paint in the vestibule is proper. It always suggests a certain refinement, but must never be employed except by persons who can afford to have the paint renewed whenever a sign of shabbiness appears. The dust of the street has free access to the vestibule if the outside door is open, and nothing like a paper, or of a texture that soap and water will injure, is admissible.

The glass of the inner vestibule door is hung with a lace or muslin curtain, to protect the hall during the day. When the lights are turned on at night, some opaque inner covering is a necessity. This is generally of silk, either in the form of a shade on

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rollers, or of a curtain looped back during the day and made to fall at night. The color of the silk depends upon that of the hall. The curtain should be so fastened that puffs of air do not disturb it when the door is opened. The general custom is to run the small brass rods through the upper or lower part of the lace or muslin.

To relieve a plain muslin or silk of a sense of flatness, it is gathered on the rods. Now and then a curtain is made of the finest French muslin with an embroidered monogram in the centre. The mus-



Found over an old door in Bleeker St.
New York

lin is stretched and made to lie smooth on the rod. Only the finest needlework is employed. The woodwork of the door makes a frame for the glass, and therefore for the curtain, accentuating it into a special feature.

A door opening from the street directly into a long and narrow hall is often finished with narrow glass on the side protected by an iron grating, with a transom protected in the same way. It is possible at times to fill the side window with a plant, but ordinarily a curtain is used. In certain houses inhabited by lovers of color, or collectors of hang-

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ings, the transom and side lights are treated with a Madras curtain covered with flowers, the light as falling through giving the effect of stained glass. Beautiful shadow silks produce the same effect, but they are never to be employed except by persons understanding the relative values of things. Indiscriminately used, these textiles at doors would be as objectionable as the colored glass of commerce, against which too fierce a crusade can hardly be preached.

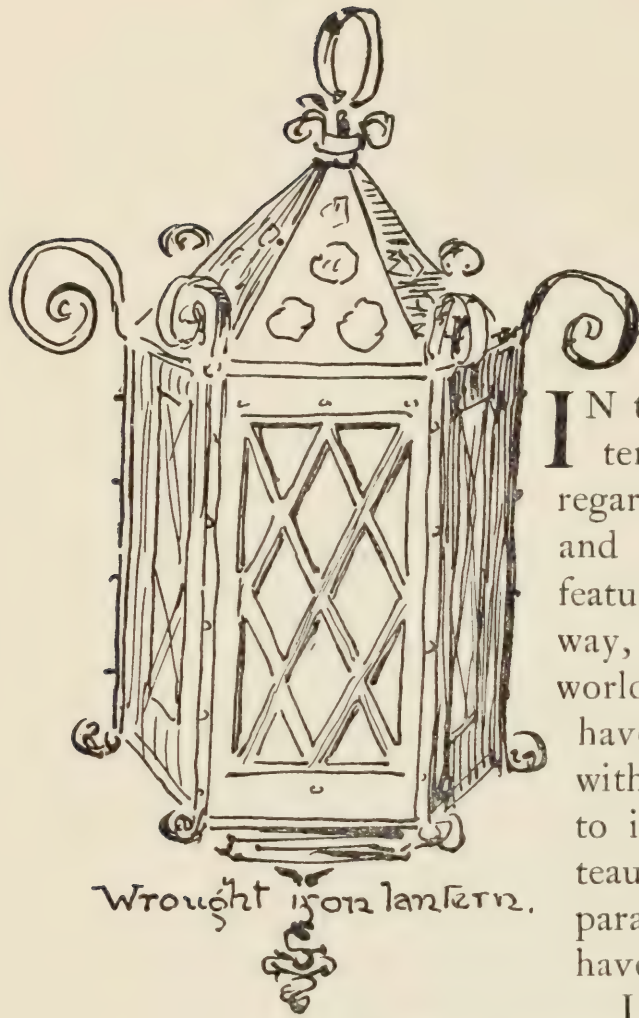
A solid wood door is made interesting by a bull's-eye and a knocker, like the door once belonging to a man of letters in New York — the most cheerful and the most hospitable door to be found anywhere up and down the street. It was always as though your host had not only stood by the door himself, but had come with extended hands half-way down the steps to greet you. It was the one door of its kind on the block, of panelled oak, with one yellow bull's-eye, a brass knocker, and three numbers written in brass figures. Simply to think of it now brings back the feeling of its old-time welcoming charm.



Side light
of leaded
glass
Colonial.
N.Y. house
3'0" long

CHAPTER XVIII

HALLS : HOUSES (*continued*)



IN the modern house of any pretensions the hall has come to be regarded as a distinct, important, and often imposing architectural feature, built to hold a grand stairway, once the glory of an old-world palace ; stone fountains that have sung under Italian skies, or with rafters and panellings made to imitate those in famous châteaux. But it is only within comparatively recent years that we have done as much for our halls.

I happened, the other day, to make two afternoon visits in two different houses on either side of one of our old-fashioned squares. The first house, built by a celebrated statesman, cost untold sums, and New Yorkers of a generation ago can remember the tales that were told of its magnificence, its fabulous wealth of detail, its painted ceilings, and marvellous upholsteries. But what dreariness, what gloom, what an overpowering sense

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of oppression weighed upon me as I entered, as though everything in the life of the man who had dwelt there must have pressed heavily, even the provision made for his pleasures. The hall was gloomy, lighted only by the glass of the front door; the walnut stairs, though wide and curving, were ugly and over-weighted; the two drawing-rooms, opening into each other, were lighted by only small windows in front; the huge dining-room ran across the entire width of the back of the house and took all the light from the middle. I could only sit and wonder at it all, — at the absence of grace and beauty, the disregard of cheerfulness. Here, I felt, was the apotheosis of the ponderous.

On the other side of the square a house as famous in its day, as costly and as drearily splendid, had been transformed into a dwelling of hospitable welcoming fireplaces, exquisite ceilings — a place of beauty, repose, and indefinable charm; and withal of such refinement, with such a livable, lived-in quality about it, that the veriest stranger would have felt the grace and sweetness of the hostess, prevailing like an atmosphere everywhere. Nothing that was dark, gloomy, or ponderous was permitted here. The marble hall, which I entered from the street, was wide and spacious. The marble stairs leading to the hall on the dining-room floor had been turned. Tapestries were hung above them,



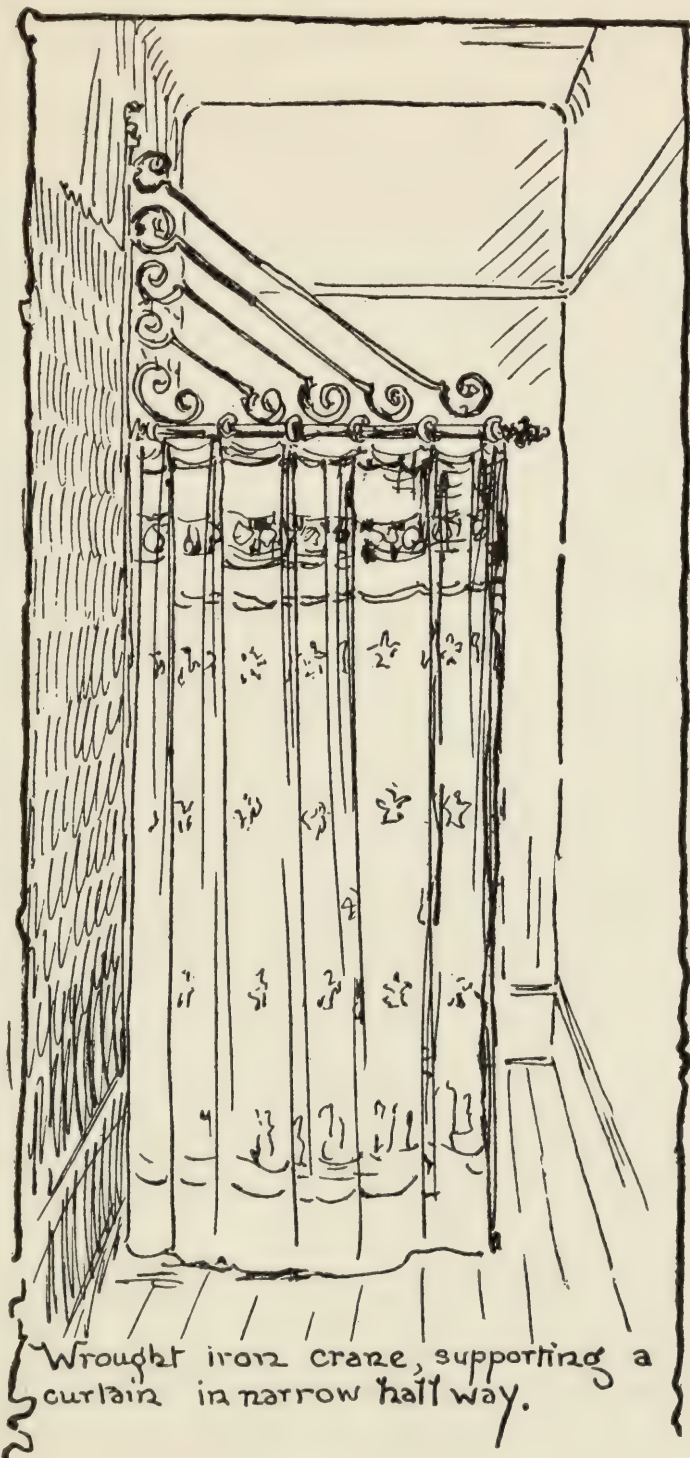
Side light
from
812
old house
112
Philadelphia.

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while below their marble facing an Italian fountain trickled into an old marble tomb filled with maiden-hair ferns and white azaleas.

I had seen this hall before, but coming as I did that day direct from the house on the other side of the square, with its dingy old hall which marked the height of a past-time splendor, the contrast between the two made a profound impression on me. I realized then what the architectural development of the last twenty-five years had done for New York; what, especially, it had done for our halls, no longer built along stilted and angular lines. The wild, haphazard departure of many an ambitious householder into halls large enough to be used as living-rooms merely marked a certain stage in its evolution. People felt the need of something better than the things they had, and when the larger halls were built, they did not want the extra space to go to waste. We are an economical people, for all our lavishness in certain directions. But the charm of the hall I have just described would have been hopelessly destroyed had there been any sign of its being used *except* as a means of passage from the street, and from the two cloak-rooms on that floor to the hall of the drawing-room floor above, where the family life began. For the possessor of a sumptuous house with beautifully proportioned halls can afford, even less than the possessor of a modest passage-way, to neglect certain principles of good form and social usage.

When one lives in the country on estates of one's



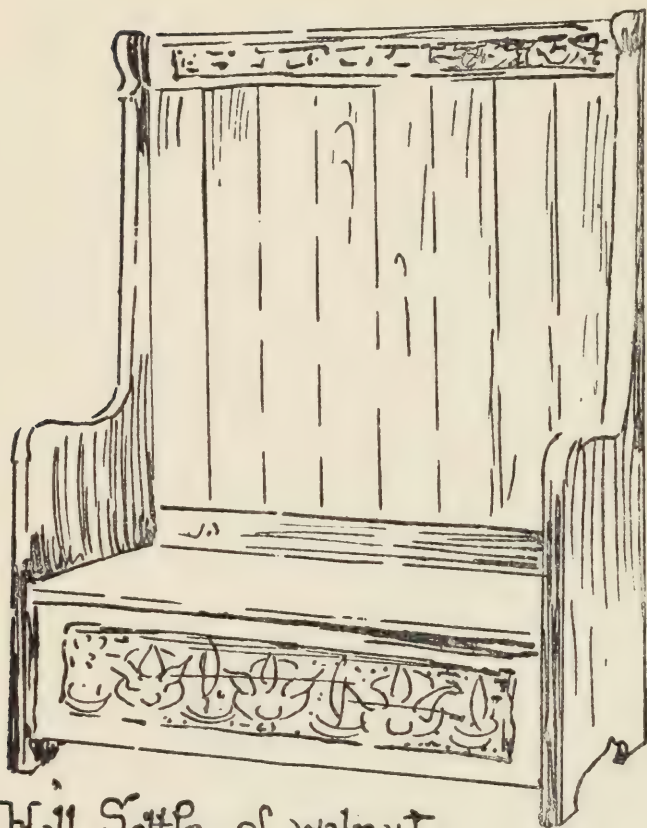
own, and when one is remote from the neighbor and protected from the pedler, much latitude may be permitted in the arrangement of the hall, since much

is permitted in the life of the family.

In summer houses, built in the woods, or by the sea, the outer door may open directly into the living-room, out of which the stairs ascend to the bed-rooms. But this arrangement is the intended expression of a desire to escape the exactions of a punctilious world, to get away from responsibilities into a holiday atmosphere. The halls of such places, therefore, like the lives of the fam-

ily frequenting them, cannot be subjected to conventional rules, the whole purpose having been to escape them.

When the hall is used as a living-room, a separate entrance should be provided for the stranger, the telegraph boy, the book agent, or the newly arrived neighbor who has come to return a visit. The lady



Hall Settee of walnut.
with carved panels -

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of the house may not object to throwing her doors wide open to the world, but the timid stranger may prefer a more gradual approach. It makes a bad impression on the visitor to discover himself ushered into the very midst of things when the door of a town house is opened, whether the family be present or not. I do not like it any more than, having a note to write, I like to be seated by a maid before a desk where all my hostess's papers lie open before me. Halls that are used as living-rooms are never permissible unless there are service doors in some other parts of the house. The ancestral halls of Europe, pictures of which have no doubt quickened the longing of many an imitator on this side the water, served a different purpose. An upstairs hall reserved for the exclusive use of the family, like the downstairs hall of an out of the way country house, is an altogether different affair. It may be treated as a family lounging place, provided only the servants do not need to pass through it on their way to their rooms.

I am careful to make this point, because the hall and the passage are so often violated in attempts to use them as living-rooms. Not long since, some one wrote to ask me how a passage-way, eight by fourteen and without windows, in an ordinary brick house, could be made into a Turkish smoking-room for her husband and his guests — Turkish smoking-rooms, as she told me, having become fashionable in her neighborhood, and there being no other space in her house available for one. She was par-

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ticularly anxious to know how the draught from the staircase, which led into her basement, might be kept from the smokers, and the other stairs concealed, — the only stairs, by the way, which her servants could use. She permitted no smoking in her parlor on account of the odor.

One of the most exquisite halls I know of, for a country house, was designed with reference to a pine-tree outside. The design included it in the scheme of the interior, as it were. This was done by putting a large plate-glass window before it at the end of the hall. Not to make too abrupt an impression, the six feet of wall-space below the window was filled with green, an Italian marble fountain dripping over them into a marble basin on the floor which held aquatic plants. At the other end the hall opens on a wide marble terrace descending by steps to the lawn, beyond which miles of green land stretch to the hills on the horizon. In this way the feeling of the country has been preserved in a hall of beautiful appointments, the green woods at one end being balanced by the stretch of green lands on the other.

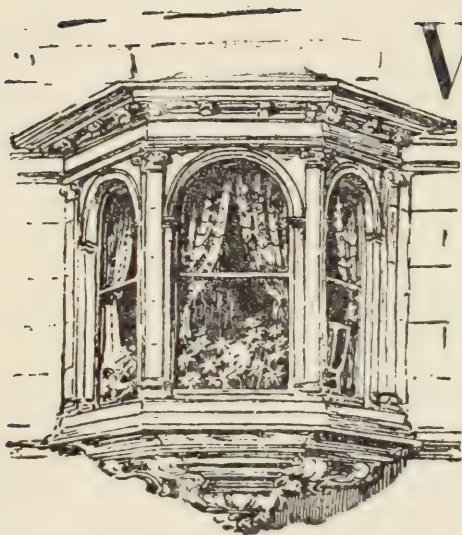
The entrance door is on the side, so are the stairs, which turn half-way up and give a wide landing with a large memorial window. This window is so placed as to be visible only from the bottom or top of the stairs, making a distinct and separate feature, which does not interfere with the hall's general tone or character. I am careful to make this point, because again and again I have been appealed to

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by persons living in the country who have been persuaded into the use of stained glass in their houses only to have everything about them thrown out of key, without their understanding why; and who have placed this glass, not where, were it beautiful (which unhappily it is not apt to be), it would have a value of its own, and for itself, but where, as in a parlor, it becomes a dominating and discordant note.

CHAPTER XIX

WINDOWS



Window arranged to
present an attractive
appearance from the
Street.

WINDOWS have often been likened to the eyes of a house, but they are something more than that to me. I never escape the feeling of the face behind the pane, and seldom of the soul shining out of the face. Show me the windows of a house and I will show you the manner of person dwelling inside. Walk the streets, drive along the country roads, do not the windows that you see, like the faces you meet, betray charac-

ter back of them? Consider the perpetually drawn green shades of the farmhouse parlor. Do you not get the very atmosphere of the room, a room never opened to the sunlight, and but rarely opened to the visitor? Think of the cheap Nottingham-lace curtains, falling in straight folds from the curtain rod to the floor. You see them everywhere, — in the tenements of towns, and in small brick houses of country places and of outlying city streets. I

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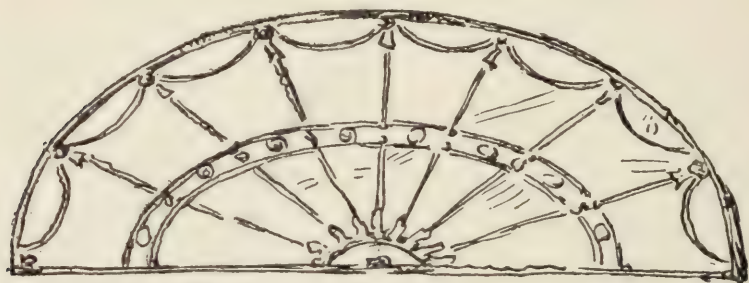
am always suspicious of these, they serve so often as shields behind which a householder may peep at you unobserved. Now and then one of these curtains will part, giving you a vision of untidy children. And you know how pretentious the even cheap lace has been. Not half a block away there may be a hanging costing not a third as much, which, by a loop or a line, or some subtle touch, betokens refinement and order.

And even in these better-appointed windows the materials of which the thin curtains are made are often too elaborate to be laundered, and are made, therefore, to last through a season. Toward spring those of many a prosperous person show heavy lines of dust just above the sash. The silk or satin of the drapery within may shed this dust, but muslin retains it. Who can deny, then, that it becomes easy to question the habits of the house-keeper who chooses a material that cannot be laundered, putting it in a window where the dust of the street is bound to reach it as it rises in the wind? In New York, where cleanliness is only purchased at the price of eternal vigilance, curtains next the window-panes must be washed frequently. I know one woman who has her thin parlor curtains changed sixteen times from November to May; but then, she always keeps her windows open a little from the top. There is never a neglected corner in her life.

The nature of the inmates is also betrayed by the objects placed in a window. Once, as I rode in a trolley past a row of three or four story brick

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houses on a side street, I counted twelve windows in four blocks that had Nottingham lace curtains drawn just far enough apart to show a lamp in each. A light in a window may have a certain authority lent it by poetry and sentiment, but certainly not when the lamp is set on a pedestal and framed about by lace draperies. Of course I knew that those gaudy affairs, with their gorgeously decorated glass globes, just under those fluffy, inflammable curtains, were never meant to be lighted, else no fire department could have saved the city. Their



Farlight from an old house in Philadelphia

owners had only desired to prove certain possessions to rival neighbors, like vain children who parade the streets to show off new umbrellas. Growing plants in these windows would have indicated other sentiments, but lamps, cheap statuettes, and cut flowers in vases, placed in a window with curtains falling high behind them, arranged solely for the benefit of the passer-by, are intended only for display, and stamp the householder as one who knows nothing either of social requirements or the manner of living adopted by a polite world.

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And yet I maintain that the passer-by ought never to be altogether ignored in the arrangement of our windows. There was a woman in Boston who understood this. She had her window-boxes filled every spring, and her little plot of city yard planted with flowers. When she went away in summer she employed a gardener to keep these boxes and flowers in order, solely for the benefit of the people left behind in the streets, and obliged to pass daily miles and miles of closed windows and drawn blinds. Her action has always appealed to me. I believe that windows, like well-bred people, can protect themselves from intrusion without putting palpable affronts upon every one who approaches, and that they can do this while still being affable and graceful. One cheerful window, arranged with consideration for one's neighbors and the passers-by, will often relieve the tedium of a whole city block, and send the wayfarer on his way rejoicing. Opposite my dressmaker's there is a window of this kind. It is always flooded with sunshine. The panes are brightly polished, so that in the sunlight they serve of themselves as a protection. No muslin curtains hang against them; instead, brass jardinières fill the sills, the ivies and the little palms in them having been trained high enough to act as a screen. Yet the idea of their being intended as a screen does not occur to you. You think of the plants, of their free, sunny life. At the same time, as you study them you realize that no haphazard touch has arranged them; that they have been

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placed there by an expert with skill and tact, producing an impression of undeniable charm. You catch sight of a pair of muslin curtains inside, and you know that in cases of necessity these curtains can be allowed to fall. You know, too, that there is a shade which can be drawn when the lamps are lighted. It is easy to see that people loving blue skies and sunlight live behind those panes; people preferring the out-of-doors, with its freshness, to stuffy effects indoors produced by windows trimmed with frills and furbelows like a lady's petticoat.

There are ever so many ways in which a window may be made to look well from the street and be given an individual and distinctive air. A note of red in one, a touch of yellow in another, a growing leaf against the pane, will accomplish much. You may get a note of color sometimes from an inside drapery; sometimes from a soft rich satin hanging, or again from a plant in bloom. They must be mere suggestions, however, else they become obtrusive, and obtrusiveness, especially where one's family life is concerned, is always vulgar. "In privacy," says Mr. Fuller, "there is a fine charm, a high distinction." But I sometimes believe that he is right when he adds, that among us, especially in certain parts of our country, "nothing is more public than privacy, nothing more ostentatious than reticence, nothing more calculated to draw the unfavorable notice of the community than any attempt at seclusion." For we take down all the fences in



Window in an Entrance Hall in London
showing seat, leaded glass windows and bookcases

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our country towns; we line our houses with front porches that become our summer drawing-rooms; inside our houses we sit with open doors. "What can I do to make my parlor look homelike?" some woman wrote me once. "When my husband and I come home from church on Sunday night we always stop on the pavement and look into our parlor. Everything seems so stiff, so back against the wall." No wonder, as I wrote her; perhaps even the chairs are trying to shrink out of the way of public gaze. Need I say that I urged her to begin her reform by pulling down her shades? She is not the only woman living in a small town who thinks it proper to permit the passing stranger a view of her parlor or her sitting-room, who would have all the world know that in her house, at least, there are no secrets to be hidden!

One of the best ways of securing privacy by means of a curtain is to hang a thin, almost transparent colored material over the muslin that is next the panes. The muslin curtain against the panes can then be looped back, high or low, not only to look well from the street, but to admit all the air and sunlight possible into the room. The sheer and soft transparent material which is hung over the muslin on the room side will soften the light that enters, and in this way add to the general charm of the room, especially for those who are sensitive to color. The view of the street from inside the room is also more or less excluded; for, unlike the lace curtain, this sheer material does not permit the indi-

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vidual indoors to take advantage of the man on the street, gaining a view of him without being seen one's self. You must draw it aside in order to see distinctly the objects outside. This, however, is easily done, the curtain being run on a fine brass rod. Some persons content themselves with using picture-wire, which often serves a most excellent purpose for housekeepers cramped for means.

This sheer material is generally of silk, — not China silk, it must be remembered, which is much too thick for the purpose. Silkoline, when a good shade can be had, does very well, if economy has to be considered. I have known yellow silkoline, that cost but ten cents a yard, to hang in a sunny window for several years without fading, and to be laundered in the meantime too. When the muslin curtain next the panes is white, the glare in sunlight becomes distressing, and this soft over-hanging softens the glare. Yellow, pink, or apple-green is used, depending upon the color in the room. Now and then a lover of brilliant hues insists on red. Soft rose-pink, however, is quite as becoming. Yellow is always used where the light is cold, as in a north room. Yellow, as we all know, gives the effect of sunlight. The curtain against the pane is not always ruffled, though so much of softness and grace is gained by a ruffle that it is generally worth while to have one, even at the cost of a little trouble.

My reasons for suggesting two curtains are many. They are especially desirable for the dweller

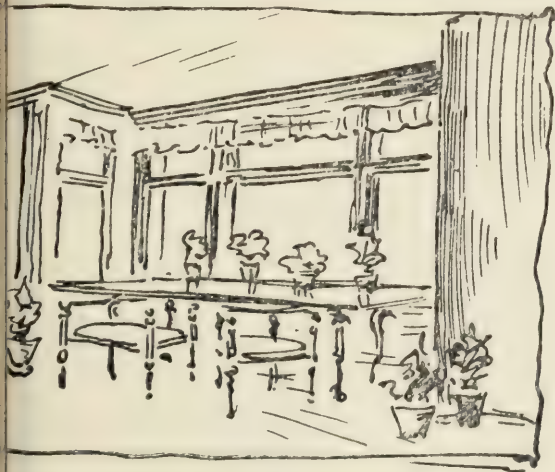
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in town, who does not have trees or views, but his opposite neighbor's walls to consider. These sheer soft silks can be as readily laundered as muslin, though more care must be exercised. The question of gathering dust, then, need not be considered. Again, to one who is sensitive to color, these soft tones add a certain quality to the room, without which every other color in it would be destroyed. The white glare of a muslin curtain not only robs a room of its restfulness, but where for purposes of privacy a muslin is a necessity, the soft overhanging helps you to treat your windows and your walls as one harmonious whole. For windows, when arranged for privacy and not for a view outside, really become part of your wall-line and color ; part of the general framing of your interior, as it were. To have your wall-surface broken by a series of glaring white windows is in reality to have it broken by a series of unpleasant patches. The exigencies of modern city life, where narrow streets and ugly exteriors prevail, demand a different treatment for the window from that which ruled in old palaces, or from that which might hold good in country estates, where uncurtained windows are a refreshment and a delight. My reasons for the two thin draperies, then, is that even a sheer, thin silk against the panes gives from outside an impression of heaviness. It conveys no impression of transparency to those on the street, but looks like an opaque hanging. From the inside of the room this impression disappears, and the outline of

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the muslin curtain against the panes is clearly visible through the transparent silk.

Leaded glass serves an excellent purpose, not only where a question of privacy is to be considered, but where there is an ugly outlook to be concealed. It is more expensive than muslin or silk, and also, in certain places, more interesting. Where large windows are a necessity, these leaded panes, admitting the light, are better from an architectural point



of view, and will serve also to render outside objects into mere suggestions and outlines, robbing them of many of their unpleasant features. When, however, the window opens against an opposite wall, as

it must in the halls of some city houses, or in libraries or rooms built in "L's," and this wall is of a hue which, when reflected in your room, will destroy your own effects, a careful choice must be made of the material, and especially of the tone to be used in your leaded glass. This careful choice is especially urged upon those dwelling in apartments, where all the windows are on a level, the corner one having no opposite wall to consider, while one in the middle room may open directly on the objectionable color. If, for instance, you desire a yellow

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tone in your glass, and the opposite wall shows a dusty red, your glass, as a color, may be thrown all out of key. It is necessary, therefore, not only to experiment with the glass in the shop, holding it between you and the light, but to experiment with it in your own window, placing it between you and the offending reflection. This method of choice is especially urged, as in many cases a window, after being placed, will have to be removed for a better one, because of these unforeseen complications.

It should go without saying that when I refer to the question of color or of tone in leaded glass, cheap stained glass — the so-called “art glass” of commerce — is not referred to. This glass is a constant snare to many an inexperienced but ambitious house builder. It should be avoided like a pestilence.

Artists will often make use of the brush on a window from which a view is unpleasant. In the illustrations on page 183, two interesting examples are shown. The window over the sideboard directly faces a neighbor's inquisitive panes. The colors used in this instance by the artist are soft yellows and browns. On the shelf which has been made to run across the sash, some Spanish jugs holding small plants are generally placed. Sometimes a fish-bowl holding cut flowers is placed there instead, producing exquisite effects in color and light. In the other illustration the window has been treated not only with bull's-eyes, but with flowers and a coat of arms. This window also faces a near-by neighbor. Sometimes such a window is merely treated

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with a varnish of Venetian pink, giving a soft yellow tone.

In all old brick and stone houses of the conventional kind, with parlor and dining-room opening out of each other, the effect produced is of a long and narrow gallery lighted by windows at either end. You can never escape the feeling of these windows whichever way you look. Draperies that are made to fall straight over them are never interesting, however fine their texture, since they come at the end of the visual line, as it were. As a view of a city back yard is seldom or never good, the windows themselves should be made so. This has sometimes been done by putting a ground glass in the dining-room window, hanging from the middle sashes transparent coats of arms in glass. An iron grill is drawn across the window, its figure outlined against the glass.

Sometimes one of these dining-room windows will face a church wall that is pretty enough in the spring and summer when the vine which covers it is green. But in winter this wall, dull in tone and ugly, becomes almost an aggressive feature in the dining-room. The other window will have been transformed into a door leading to the butler's pantry. In such an instance both the glass door leading into the butler's pantry and the window looking on the church should be curtained alike. Since there is no question of sky to consider, the curtains should fall in a single piece from the top of the sash, so fashioned with little strings run through

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rings that they can be drawn up to a certain height, a space being left below. This space in the window toward the church should then in winter be filled with evergreens in boxes, so that as one looks from the other room or from the table, one would get the impression of growing plants outside. The curtain over the glass door leading into the pantry should be drawn to the same height as that in the window, in order that the butler may move in and out under it without inconvenience. A screen (a necessity in itself), when placed by this door, conceals the fact of this being only a door, and not a window with plants on its sill, like the other.

When one of these old-fashioned dining-rooms opens into a glass-enclosed porch, like those common to many houses in New York, the dining-room curtains should not be made to fall over the windows or glass doors leading to it. They should be so hung that they are preserved as openings on to the porch, the porch itself not being treated as an excrescence to the house, not being made hideous as a pantry maid's catch-all, but an agreeable addition to the room itself. This can be done by setting plants out on the porch, or by hanging thin curtains against the glass which encloses it, making that glass and its draperies, or the plants arranged against it, the objective point in the room, and not the doors or windows leading on to the porch. One of these old glass-enclosed porches becomes, when treated in this way, a charming addition to your house,

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agreeable to the eye in winter, and delightful as a lounging place when the days grow warm.

The question being of such importance, I can hardly err, I think, in urging still more strongly that, while still preserving the utilitarian value of windows for ventilating and light-giving purposes, they should be made as restful and agreeable as the walls which enclose us. To accomplish such a result the householder must, even after the architect

has finished, consider the question from many points of view. The locality and environment of the window must be taken into consideration — whatever of outlook you may wish to bring into your room, and that which you may wish to exclude from it. Then, again, there are the approaches in the room itself, the near-by



objects, the pieces of furniture, the color and decoration of the walls, the color and character of the expanse outside. In cities, as we have seen, it is frequently necessary to exclude every outside object, making our windows part of a general framework in which we are housed. The particular problem which confronts the householder, then, becomes one of tones and lights of agreeable shades, that must harmonize not only with the colors of the room, making the interior with its surrounding

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walls and doors one composite whole, every part blending yet balancing with the other, but producing as well a restful impression upon those looking toward the light. When, however, the expanse outside is interesting, when you want to live with it, as it were, then that expanse must be considered in relation to what we make of the foreground ; in other words, the room in which we sit when regarding the expanse before us. Country and town houses, then, present altogether different problems with their windows. Perhaps the best way of explaining what some of these problems are is to give examples in which they have been successfully overcome.

One room, built by a celebrated architect, directly faces a square filled with trees and grass. The room is all green and dull gold. The Venetian ceiling is raftered and inlaid with painted panels, taking up the tones of tapestries hung on the walls over burlaps that has been treated with a dull gold wash. The window itself, a square bay, some twenty feet long and six feet deep, is entirely filled with rubber-trees, but the framework and sashes have been treated with the same gold and green that appears in every other part of the room, so that one who looks towards it experiences no shock, but is conscious of having had the eye led by agreeable gradations toward the highest light in the room. This effect could never have been attained had the window not been treated with the soft tones prevailing in the rest of the room. Green alone, or gold alone, would have spoiled it,

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and the absence of the rubber-trees would have left you with a sense of loss and possible harshness. The soft cream tones of the tapestries are repeated again in the thin cream curtains that hang against the panes. There are no heavy draperies.

The same tact has been shown in the treatment of the windows of a Fifth Avenue apartment house. This apartment is on the tenth floor and overlooks a mile or more of ugly roofs and chimney-pots ending at the river, a great stretch of sky overhead. The sills outside have been filled with boxes of evergreens and ivies, so that if you are standing in the room you see nothing of the ugly roofs and chimneys below. Curtains of a soft cream tone are hung from the upper casing to fall over the sash, but are drawn up on cords run through rings so as to form a straight line across the window some twelve or more inches above the evergreens. In this way any one sitting in the room can look up and see only a foreground of green against the blue of a western sky, the scalloped lace line of the soft curtain forming part of the frame to a lovely picture. There is, of course, with this arrangement, no glare from the sky, and the tact of the hostess has been proved by the way in which her windows have been made agreeable to those who are in her drawing-rooms. ✕

I know a man of letters who loves a certain maple-tree growing in his garden. Through all seasons this tree is a delight. In winter its architecture fascinates him, in the spring its delicate foliage, in summer its shade, and in the autumn its flame of

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crimson and gold. No window broken into panes would give him all this tree, so he has had plate-glass run to the floor and his door transformed into a window. His writing-table is so placed that as he is at work, he has the feeling of being out of doors and with his tree.

A pine-tree, much loved by its mistress, was brought



into her hall in the following way. At the end of the hall she built her window of plate-glass some six feet from the floor. The branches of the pine then nearly touched the pane, the woods stretching back of the pine. Not to allow

the sense of the tree as a feature of the hall to throw the rest of the hall out of key, a Florentine fountain was placed in the wall just under the window. The water from its spout fell into a shallow marble basin some three feet wide and seven feet long, and set in the floor. Aquatic plants grew in this basin, ferns and green vines filled the little marble niches by the water-spout, so that the entire end of the hall was made green by growing plants and melodious with running water, the pine-tree outside being only part of the general construction,

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of the prevailing sentiment, which is perhaps a better way of putting it.

An acre of oak-trees has been considered in still another manner by the owner of a country house. Her library window is a square bay sixteen feet by two. A writing-table of large dimensions is placed in front of this window, a table so big that two persons can write there comfortably, and a row of books can fill either end. Along the edge of this table, nearest the window, brass and porcelain pots filled with plants are set, so that if you are sitting at the table, you can look up from your portfolio across the foreground of growing plants to the woods beyond. As the character of the woods change with the different seasons, the plants are changed. The beauty of this library window in autumn, when the oak-leaves are brown, is impossible to describe. Then the lady of the house fills her brass and copper pots on the table with chrysanthemums, — yellow and brown and russet chrysanthemums, — which, against the oak-trees just beyond, are indescribable in their loveliness. All the appointments of the writing-table are of brass. Silver, it need hardly be said, would be an altogether false note on that table. Shades are drawn at night, but there are no thin draperies of any kind: none are needed.

One ingenious young woman in a studio-building has a high window from where she can see almost the whole of New York stretched below her. Under it the blundering architect placed a steam-heater. She therefore has had built over the heater a high

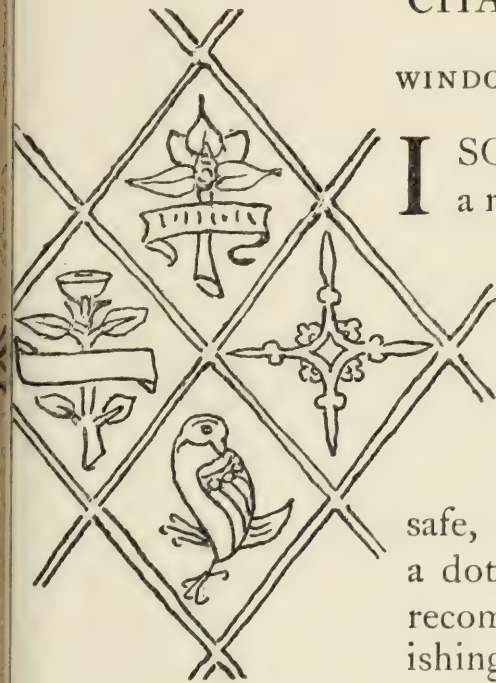
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seat with a reading-desk in front. Over the top of the window a shelf is run for holding copper and brass. Here she sits and enjoys the sunsets, or the lights of the city at night.

In another instance, a dining-room bay-window was treated in this way. It was one of those ugly bays that were once so common in town, and which never seemed to bear any relation to the rest of the house. The landlord would make no alterations, but the tenant put a wainscoting all round her room, carrying it round the jut of the bay. Here, above the wainscoting, on either jut, she put narrow shelves, enclosing them with leaded glass matching in design that which she placed in her windows. The shelves were filled with her Venetian glass, her decanters, finger-bowls, and tumblers. The lower part, that which was made by the continuation of the wainscoting, was transformed into a closet with closed doors. The window-seats were cushioned to match the covering of the chairs.

CHAPTER XX

WINDOWS (*continued*)



ed glass from the
Commandery.

4" x 6"
carries, black & yellow;

I SOMETIMES believe that a ruffled dotted-muslin curtain does as much for a house as a tailor-made dress for a woman. It always has a certain air, and adapts itself to many occasions.

One who chooses it is safe, and when one is in doubt, a dotted muslin is always to be recommended. And it is astonishing how often such a doubt arises, especially among those who live in out of the way country places, in army posts or small towns, where the near-by shops are filled with materials

declared to be the "latest," but which are in reality but the stuffs discarded from manufacturers, or from larger retail establishments in town.

It has often excited in me something akin to compassion when samples of such materials have been sent to me by housekeepers in remote parts of

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the country. They have been so hopeless, so hideous, so altogether impossible. All my sympathy has gone out to the deluded woman who has been tricked by a mercantile announcement into buying what good taste has never approved, but upon which she has been led to believe fashion has set its sanctioning seal. And just here I would like to say that it seems to me both a duty and an obligation for those living at great centres, whether as manufacturers, designers, or newspaper correspondents, to send only the best into outlying districts, since that which is sent seems stamped with a certain authority and is accepted as such. Being bad, it can only act as a deteriorating influence upon the public taste. It may seem absurd to urge that a stuff, or a wall-hanging, a stair carpet or a table cover, may exert an educational or moral effect upon a household or a community. But the influence is not to be denied. That which we introduce into our houses affects us each day that we live, drags us down to a certain level, or raises us. We cannot escape the power of it. We are hampered or assisted, as by the fit and cut of our clothes. The effect indeed is stronger and therefore worse, for clothes wear out more quickly than furniture. And habit and custom end by reconciling us to the objectionable, so that by and by we find ourselves building up around the obnoxious feature. I have known this to happen with a pair of red plush curtains, costly enough but ugly, which a woman of my acquaintance felt bound to use, and around which eventually she built her entire house,

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to its ultimate destruction as a place of beauty or repose.

As it is now the custom to curtain all the windows of one's house alike, so that they present a uniform appearance from the street, this dotted muslin cannot but add a note of refinement to one's dwelling. If such curtains introduce too white a light into the room, the sheer transparent silk, or a silkoline, already referred to, can be made to fall over them, softening the glare. The monotony of the exterior produced by this uniform appearance can always be relieved by a green or flowering plant in the different windows, or again by window-boxes on the sill outside, filled with flowering plants in summer and evergreens in winter. One well-known house in town has for years followed the same fashion for its thin curtains, which are never made to cover all the sash. They are alike in all the windows, — ruffled, then crossed, and looped high. This leaves the greater part of the window exposed, where the curtains fall away on either side, and the bare and awkward space across the top is avoided. A study of the individual windows reveals the fact that in each room there is a different hanging, — blue satin in a bedroom, yellow in the drawing-room. In one window you catch the outlines of a sumptuous Venetian chair. You realize then that individuality reigns within.

There is a white grenadine which washes and makes a good thin curtain. There are *point d'esprits*, and a material known as fish-net. There are also any number of materials, both plain and figured,

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ranging in price from six cents a yard to as many dollars. In certain country houses, in young girl's rooms, in the cabins of Adirondack camps, these cheap flowered materials, when good in color, are most effective, especially when ruffled or edged with a fringe of little balls. They may be used at the same time in trimming the bed. You must choose thin, transparent materials, unless, of course, you want complete seclusion, the sense of it which an opaque shade would give you, not only shutting you in, but shutting out the very feeling of the street — sometimes a necessity in New York. Generally speaking, these thin curtains should have a large mesh and incline toward the cream tones, unless softened inside. A pure white curtain should not be used in a room where the wood-work is dark and the contrast therefore too strong.

I know a charming country-house window with white casings. (The wood-work of the whole house, except that of the oak library, is white.) This particular window is at the end of a long room and looks directly into the branches of a maple-tree. The panes are small, and the model followed was found in one of Mr. E. A. Abbey's pictures. There are two parts to the window, and the upper part is narrow and divided from the lower, which is twice its depth, by a broad beam which forms a shelf, set out at regular intervals with pots of geraniums in bloom. The lower part alone is curtained, and with white China silk, cut after a fashion called Morris. This means that there are two pieces of

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silk, falling on either side, and that a ruffle runs along the top, breaking the awkward space between and making a frame for the panes, and for the view seen through them.

In windows of apartments, too high up from the street to pay heed to the eye of an opposite neighbor, where consequently no thin curtains are a necessity (and what a relief it is at times to be without them !), thick curtains may be cut *Morris* fashion. This serves an excellent purpose, especially when the wood-work is bad, since it makes an agreeable frame for the window. Almost any thick curtain may be cut in this way. I have seen *denin*, at sixteen cents a yard, made most effective when treated after this fashion. When the ruffle is run on a separate rod, the side pieces can be drawn under it at night. This upper ruffle serves in many cases to keep off the glare of the sky.

Cheese-cloth, when fine, is not to be despised when you have a cheap country house to be made habitable, and the landlord has inclined in his choice of stuffs to heavy woollens. The woollens should be hidden at once in an upstairs closet. The most charming summer parlor that I know is at *Bar Harbor*. The white curtains are all looped back with great bows of pink *cheese-cloth*.

Much depends on the looping of a curtain. An abominable fashion prevails in some country towns of so looping and straining a thin curtain, by catching it back on the sides and pulling it together at the bottom, that a diamond-shaped opening is left,

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an opening so low down that you would have to break your back to look through it, and so small, that all opening and shutting of the window, all washing of the panes, would be impossible. Yet you know that the householder has expended considerable labor on it, and that she prides herself on the result ! She betrays herself, however, by not knowing that a curtain which cannot be readily pushed aside altogether misses its purpose. It might as well then be an iron grating. It certainly is not a curtain. When an arrangement so stiff and immovable is desired, a grill is suggested, not a curtain, — the fashion of the Orientals where women can only look into the street through a lattice. Any book on the Alhambra will give one the designs. But a curtain should be so fashioned that it can be drawn with ease, whatever the material, and the elaborately upholstered lambrequins and curtains of many houses and hotel parlors are objectionable in the extreme. Wood and metal screens must suggest a certain inflexibility, but a curtain never should, whatever its texture and whatever its quality.

Unless the sky produces an unpleasant glare the aim should always be to bring it into the room ; but it was only after much study that I found out how to accomplish this in windows so near those of opposite neighbors that thin curtains were a necessity. To cover only the lower half of a window was impossible, since the fashion always suggests various advertised parlors with signs in their windows.

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Finally I hit upon this plan, which gives me the sun or the stars when I want them. The curtains are ruffled down one side and across the bottom. A double row of stitching two inches from the top holds the small brass rod, and leaves a heading, which, when the curtain is fulled on the rod, looks like a ruffle. Just in the centre of the window-frame, these curtains are crossed. I allow a lap of ten inches on either side, but the size of the window must control this in individual cases. A band of the same material, or a ribbon (preferably a band), tacked in the corners of the frame, loops the curtains on either side at whatever angle is desired, the rest of the curtain falling in graceful lines. Privacy can then be secured by plants on the sill, which fill up the lower part of the window and leave the upper part free. Or, the thin over-hanging already referred to can be used, and drawn over the others when a special sense of security is desired. Instead of the brass rod, small brass-headed tacks can be used to fasten the curtains on the window-frame, but this can only be done in parts of the country where dust does not prevail, as in certain summer cottages in the woods where a curtain may do service for a season without washing.

It must be remembered that there are an endless number of thin materials used for covering the panes, and that they are often so costly as to be beyond the reach of the average householder. Sometimes they are of lace, sometimes of embroidered silk. A new fashion will be introduced from Paris, adorn for a

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season some private house, and then be found in every milliner's window or in the parlors of fashionable habit-makers. They become impossible for the private individual. These facts make it imperative for those who cannot afford to discard a thing because it has ceased to be sufficiently exclusive to be wary of committing themselves to extremes. It is better to be conservative in dress and furniture and in fashions of all kinds, unless one has money enough to buy the best of the changing styles.

Thin curtains are generally run on a small brass rod with a heading. The rod fastens in sockets at the side. These brass rods are very cheap. When a window is curved at the top, the brass rod is bent to follow the curve of the window-frame, a plan in every way to be preferred to that of using a grill over the top and suspending the curtain from below. These thin curtains should on no account be suspended from rings and curtain pins on the thick rod intended for the support of a heavy curtain. The room is only made untidy when this is done. If there be no dust to consider, as in the woods, and when the question of injuring the window-casing does not arise, the thin curtain is sometimes nailed to the frame, a band of the curtain material being tacked over the gathers with brass-headed tacks placed at regular intervals. The heading is left above the band.

The ordinary every-day modern house needs a heavy curtain, not only to keep off the draught, but to temper the light, and in many instances to

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soften the lines of ugly wood-work. When a house has been carefully designed by some architect, and when windows have been built as they should be, and as they are in certain places, curtains cease to be a necessity, and are sometimes impossible. Only the chosen few, however, have such houses. The rest of the world must concern itself with a curtain. And this curtain must always be chosen, strangely enough, less with reference to the window which it covers than to the wall against which the curtain is to be hung. Indeed, not only the wall color, but the texture of the wall-covering, must decide the question of color and texture for the curtain. Manufacturers are beginning to understand this, and in the larger windows of Fifth Avenue one sees wall-papers and curtains hanging side by side, having been designed with reference to each other. Some of the combinations are still displeasing.

It is difficult to lay down any one rule for the choosing of curtains, but generally speaking, when the flowered material appears on the wall, a plain material, or one of an unobtrusive design, should appear in the curtain, except in certain rooms of a particular size, like those of old English inns where curtains and wall-papers are exactly alike. Ordinarily, however, this combination is apt to produce an impression of confusion. The flower or figure of the wall-paper may, however, appear as a border on the drapery and only suggest a well thought out plan. When the textile, like a silk or a damask, is inconspicuous in design, the case is

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altered, and a room may be made interesting by curtains and walls and even furniture alike, the other appointments introduced lending variety to what might otherwise be monotonous. Many rooms are quite spoiled by draperies showing flowers or leaves different from those seen on the wall, as when a wall-paper has carnations and a curtain is covered with roses.

The color and texture of the floor-covering must also be considered in the choice of the curtain, not only because a cheap covering like a matting would throw a rich stuff at the windows out of key, but because the curtain, falling to the floor as it does, must not show too violent a contrast.

In the bedrooms of country houses where the wood-work is white, and where there are awnings, window-boxes, blinds, or thick shades for keeping out the early morning light, but one pair of curtains is desirable, and those may be of white dotted muslin, white dimity, French muslin, or a chintz with a white ground. Old-fashioned unbleached cotton with a ruffle of the same and a band of color, especially of Turkey red, is not bad as a curtain in simple country-house bedrooms, nor are white dimity curtains trimmed with bands of chintz repeated somewhere else in the room.

If the groundwork of the wall-paper be white, and other conditions referred to prevail, these white curtains are charming. Now and then the wood-work is dark, requiring a paper with a different ground; then a white paper becomes harsh. What-

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ever its color or quality, however, it must be made of a stuff that can be laundered. A woollen curtain in any bedroom is an abomination. Again and again, however, they are seen, old parlor curtains being sent upstairs as they grew shabby, or to furnish a country house when the town house has been renovated. Rather than have woollen curtains have none.

When for the sake of a becoming light one wants a color like pink at the window, the color of the cotton or chintz should be chosen with reference to the predominating color of some flower on the wall. Or again, when a darker effect is desired, the color of a stem or a leaf might be chosen for that of the curtain.

The effect of any plain curtain can be relieved by a band running its length, on which is repeated the design of the wall-paper; or the curtain can be trimmed with a white ball fringe. Simplicity is the aim, and the suggestion of absolute freshness and daintiness; for which reason a ribbon should never appear on a curtain unless a fresh ribbon can be supplied whenever the old one is rumpled. White cotton cords and tassels, which are very cheap, come for the purpose, and are always in order.

When the other windows of the house are under consideration, a wider range of choice is possible, although there can never be any escape from a question of the walls when a curtain is chosen.

Parlors in a country house may have almost any material in them, from chintz to a satin brocade,

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depending upon the locality, the requirements of the householder, her place in life, and the purposes for which her home is used, — whether for the giving of large entertainments or as a place of refuge after a winter in town. But whatever the circumstance, woollen hangings are to be shunned.

— Something like an epidemic of chenille curtains of coarse texture, with an upper and a lower border and a fringe, swept over this country once, and like the brown stone fronts and high stoops, might have been with us yet had the material been as enduring. Now women are succumbing to a very pestilence of cheap and gaudy imitation brocades, flowered and figured stuffs, which the shopman tells them is “about as elegant as anything he knows,” but which can never be found in houses of refinement. A plain denim, costing but sixteen cents a yard, is always to be urged upon those who find themselves tempted with any of these flashy materials which, like imitation jewelry, marks them as beyond the pale.

Velveteens are charming for curtains because of the delightful way in which they take up the light, and the still more delightful way in which they fade into tones. Corduroy is desirable for the same reason, and has the advantage of showing no spots. Water does not injure it. The dyes of corduroys are apt to be excellent. Silk taffeta is always interesting, and when trimmed with a gimp braid, or a flowered border which comes for the purpose, it adds immensely to the distinction of most rooms. Velvet

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and satin brocades, figured satins and tapestries, are only possible to those who can pay high prices, and only proper to those who have an environment suited to rich stuffs. They would never do with matting, for instance, or with the hideous varnished yellow oak of commerce. At the same time, whether one chooses a rich stuff or a cheap one, one cannot escape from the same problem. The walls, the floors, and the hangings must be harmonized, whether one pays forty dollars a yard for a brocade or sixteen cents for a denim.

The costly material only represents greater privileges in the way of buying. The fundamentals of harmony, appropriateness, repose, and color, cannot be violated and the results remain good. The same rule prevails everywhere throughout a house — throughout life, I might say.

The thick curtains are generally suspended from wood or brass rods of various sizes ; the old-fashioned heavy brass cornice on which curtains were tacked when some of us were children are never seen in these days. Now and then a lambrequin is made, but it must be plain and show no loopings. Loopings for the most part are dangerous. Only the hand of an artist should be employed. When soft silks and old stuffs are used as hangings they are sometimes simply but effectively looped over rods shaped like arrows.

It is only within a comparatively few number of years that awnings have become a common feature in town and country houses, and a still fewer

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number since their colors have been carefully studied. It was with the greatest difficulty that a rich woman of taste, who knew what she wanted, persuaded a manufacturer to make her awnings all green. Red and white or blue and white used to be the prevailing tones, but as awnings must be seen from the inside as well as from the outside, the color which they throw into a room is of paramount importance. Blue and white will absolutely destroy certain apartments, tempting the mistress to any number of experiments and extra curtains to get rid of its disastrous effect. One should experiment with a material from both the inside and the outside of the house before committing one's self to a purchase. Green is so suggestive of cool and refreshment in summer that it would always tempt me. Besides, the flowers in the window-boxes are to be considered, and whatever the blossom, green is its natural accompaniment. Red, though well enough from the outside, suggests no coolness within.

The charm of a window-box can only be understood by a genuine lover of flowers. The desire to bring growing flowers into a house is instinctive in almost all races, and one has only to read old poems and study old pictures to see for how long the instinct has ruled. One gets into a very close and intimate relationship with flowers on one's sills. They are nearer to one in feeling even than the flowers of a garden. They are so companionable, asking nothing but a little water and a little sun-

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shine, bringing only loveliness into our lives in return. When New York streets are insufferable, and the glare from the pavement is blinding, and a scorching, dust-laden heat blows in at the window, a row of geraniums in blossom, set out in a box on your sills, the thick green of its foliage between you and the street, and the cool green of the awning between you and the sky! Even the horrors of ninety-eight in the shade grow less. In eternal defiance of ugliness these flowers bloom on, and you are consoled for your own discomfort as you look at them, catching the delicate lights and shadows on the leaves, and finding a comfort and solace in their beauty which some mortals miss even in the woods.

Evergreens in winter are almost as much of a delight, and it is not the least interesting sign of a growing public taste to see these evergreens increasing in numbers about the doorways and windows of town; and to see too the skill with which they are arranged from year to year, so placed, for instance, that the highest plants are on the sides, where they make no obstruction for the view.

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CHAPTER XXI

THE FLOORS

NEXT to the treatment of the walls, the treatment of the floor is the most important factor in the furnishing of a room, and two great principles of decoration are involved in the selection of its covering — the questions of harmony and of contrast. The effect produced should be subjective and yet dominant, softening or intensifying the suggestion made by the walls. The ordinary cheap carpet of commerce, with bunches of flowers or impossible figures scattered over a background of brilliant red, green, or blue, renders any further effort in a room hopeless. The effect it produces on the senses is almost as aggressive as that of a dog that jumps, barking at you, when the door is opened.

In smaller rooms, as a rule, the floor-covering should be unobtrusive. In English basement houses also, a certain sense of amplitude is achieved by having the room by the front door, the narrow hall which leads to the dining-room in the rear, and the stairs, all covered by the same color. It entices the eye, and leads it away from the walls, so that the size of the interior, if restricted, is forgotten.

Although the tendency of the day is away from carpets and toward the use of bare floors and rugs, there are certain houses in which carpets will always

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be found, because of the draughts about the bottom of long windows, or the cold which comes up through the cracks and chills the feet, and also because even in the treatment of the most elaborate houses certain problems are not to be solved by the use of foreign or domestic pattern-articles.

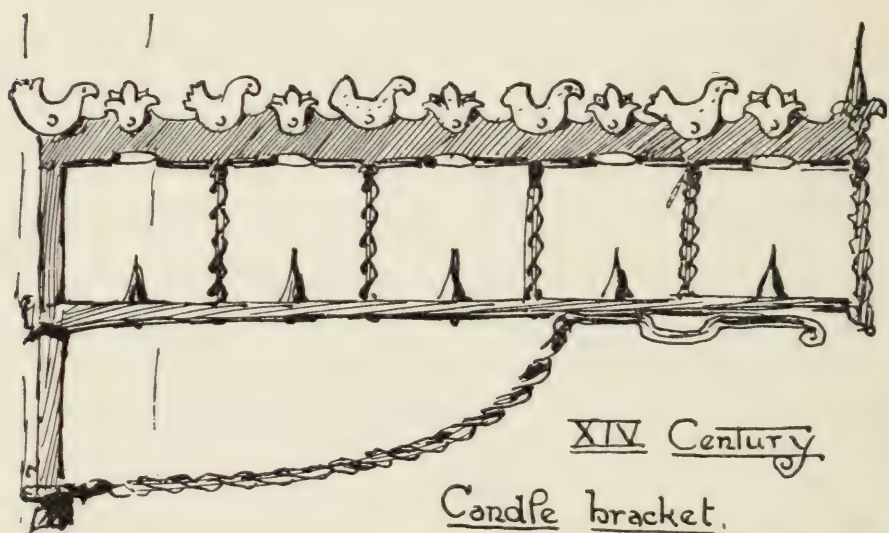
When a carpet is used on the floor of a living-room or drawing-room, it is usually of a plain color, or of two tones evenly and softly blended. The design, to be good, should be inconspicuous. Ingrain or Brussels fillings are often used, and in the more expensive imported sorts they come woven in one piece, twelve, fifteen, or even eighteen feet in width, making a seamless and very effective background for the rugs that may be thrown over them. Wilton velvet carpeting, in beautiful soft tones, with or without a border, can be made into excellent floor-coverings for drawing-rooms, and is often preferred by decorators to the less harmonious effects of the woven Eastern rugs. Where several rooms open out of each other, however, the length of space must be considered. In the front and back parlors of a city house, for instance where the sweep of the floor-line is much greater than its width, their length should be broken by the use of rugs, not accentuated by an expanse of plain color. Otherwise the impression produced is that of an alley as compared to a field.

The edges of these made rugs are faced with a heavy braid or carpet binding. They are not apt to wrinkle, but where they do slip under the feet,

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a band of rubber fastened along the edges will hold them in place. The expensive establishments often have hooks in sunken brass sockets set into the floor, to which the rings sewed to the rug are caught. The best and costliest rugs, however, are never fastened. Many of them are of almost priceless value, and are to be respected like the pictures on the wall. To mar them with a nail or a tack would be a desecration.

Were it possible, much space might be devoted to the subject of these rugs. Any detailed description of them lies beyond the scope of the present volume. A few suggestions, however, can be made.



XIV Century

Candle bracket.

Rowlestone Church

Long wax candles were stuck on the five
spikes, extending up beyond the double bar.
On both sides of the bar are quaint rows
of cocks and lilies.

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When a woman has several hundred dollars at her disposal to expend on a rug, her best plan is to indulge in a little preliminary study of the question. There are several valuable and well-illustrated works devoted to the subject of rugs, and if she can go to collectors and reliable dealers, and learn from examples on the spot, so much the better. Those who live away from great centres, however, cannot always do this, and unless she have an actual practical experience, the out-of-town purchaser will do better to go to a reliable house, rather than trust to auctions or the bargain sales that are as so many traps for her destruction, — sales where genuine old Persian carpets are offered her for a comparative trifle, when the real antique Persian carpet is rarely to be had except by the most favored of collectors, — where, too, she may be betrayed into the purchase of a crooked, ragged article, the defects of which are recommended as a proof of its genuineness. There is a saying among the Orientals, that as even Allah makes mistakes, the man who should produce a rug without a flaw would claim preëminence over Allah and thus defy and dishonor him. A charming saying: one never tires of hearing it retold by persons who have been in the rug-shops of the East. But it is nearly forgotten by those who offer us the exquisite, nearly perfect productions of the best looms. The flaws of the very beautiful, the very rare, and the very costly are not so obvious that the pointing of a moral in regard to them becomes a necessity. In many of the shops devoted

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to the sale of rugs, however, there are from time to time stray specimens marked down below their market value, reduced because of some necessity of trade, or on account of some slight imperfection quite imperceptible to the ordinary glance and interfering neither with their beauty nor their durability. Where such is the case, the buyer of limited income should by all means take advantage of the opportunity. There is a richness of design, a softness of color, in these older rugs increasingly hard to find in those of recent make.

Wherever the influence of our bustling Western civilization touches the art of the Orient, it does so to its detriment. It used to be said of Japan, years ago, that it was impossible to obtain the exact duplicate of an article purchased there. Each decoration, being the product of the artist's inspiration of the moment, could not be repeated. It was not until tons of French china had been sent into the country to be adorned with designs exactly similar, that the work of the Japanese decorators lost the touch of individuality which had stamped it as the work of the artist rather than of the artisan. The latest importations of Oriental rugs bear the hall-mark of a like degeneracy in their leaning toward our domestic "Smyrna" patterns, and the colors resulting from the use of the hideous aniline dyes lately introduced into the factories of the East. So hopeless has been the effect of the latter, that one house, extensively engaged in the selling of Oriental carpets, has a sheltered tin roof, whereon

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the worst of their new rugs are stretched for weeks at a time, alternately flooded by the hose and baked by the sun, in the effort to subdue their appalling harshness of tone. It is safe to assert that exposure to the sun and rains of seasons would never enable them to compare with the soft richness of the camel's wool, or the harmonious hues of the hand-made vegetable dyes of former years. The fact that a rug is of Oriental origin no longer insures its being desirable, nor even passable, from the artist's standpoint.

Some compensation for this state of affairs is to be found in the increased excellence of our domestic manufactures. That which our influence has destroyed in the workers of the East, we have, after our progressive Western fashion, in a measure taken unto ourselves. Oriental patterns, Oriental colorings, imitated as nearly as may be by our crude, positive chemical dyes, pervade the market. A Bokhara carpet, worth its weight in gold, full of soft darkneses and silvery lights, teeming with suggestions of the Orient, gritty, it may be, with the very sand of the great Sahara itself, has its counterpart in a fuzzy, forty dollar maroon "velvet" production from — Lynn! And the salesman who shows you this commercial chromo will probably pause beside it expectantly, saying, "Now this, this is a Bokhara pattern — the latest thing — very much admired: we sell lots of them," and be disappointed if you don't admire it. What is one to say? What can one say? It is not possible to

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make this bustling showman — educated only to the needs of his trade — understand that the qualities which made the beauty and value of the original article are wanting. One can only turn away silent, realizing that the perception of artistic values, like all other education, must be the result of the process of evolution ; comforting one's self, too, with the thought that this first apparently hopeless imitation may be the result of that blind groping for light which shall later "climb to a soul in grass and flowers."

One last word as to the place of the floor-covering before we turn to the more practical subject of the floors themselves. One of the most important factors in the question of decoration is the law of contrast. In the furnishing of a room the treatment of the walls determines more than anything what its future atmosphere is to be, — whether it shall be cool and reserved, as in a drawing-room somewhat rarely used, where the paper may be light and formal in design ; or in a library, rendered warm and livable by the presence of an insistent deeper note ; or the dining-room, furnished if possible with an effect heavy enough to suggest the substantial character of the hospitality to be expected there. In any of these or other schemes of decoration the floor-covering fills exactly the same position that the pedals of a piano fill to the musician. It should be selected to soften or to accentuate the effect suggested by the treatment of the walls. Many a room otherwise perfect has been hope-

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lessly marred by ignorance of this. Next to harmony, the law of contrast should govern its selection most strongly. When the walls of a room are covered with a variegated paper of a strong and forceful character, a carpet of plain color is usually just the restraining note needed; where the walls are covered with a tapestry full of softly blended, indefinite tones, the introduction of some one of those tints into the floor-covering may add the one full note needed for the breadth and serenity of the room as a whole. On the other hand, plain walls, hangings, and furniture-coverings may bear the same relation to a beautiful rug that a frame bears to a beautiful picture — acting as a negative yet most important background for the accentuation of its perfections. Sometimes, too, where the wainscoting is of white, or light wood, and the walls are covered with a strong color, it is absolutely essential that their tone be brought to the floor-line in the hangings, and further emphasized in the covering of the floor. Otherwise a top-heavy effect is produced, and the room has a capped appearance, which destroys entirely the effect of space. In the recently finished hall of a Colonial country house, where the ceiling and wainscoting were white and the upper walls of Empire green, the portières suggested by the decorator were of softest foliage greens; but the whole color scheme of the room went awry until the hostess had the good sense to discard the valuable foreign rugs upon which she had prided herself, and purchased an inexpensive green-and-

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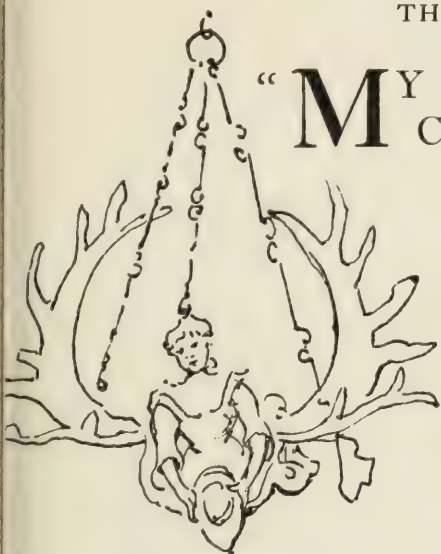
white cotton square, which proved the "lost chord" for which she had been vainly searching. Only a righteous search after wisdom gave her the courage for such an act.

When a question of expense is to be considered, a good floor-covering is made of jeans or denim, especially in nurseries or dining-rooms. As the material is thin it is often as well to use a carpet-lining beneath. Should this be too heavy, newspapers may take its place—to be thrown away when the covering is taken up to be washed. Oil-cloth and linoleums are to be recommended where there is much traffic and bare floors are disliked. A carpet for a hall is altogether wrong where children run back and forth with their muddy shoes, or where there is much passing to and fro, unless it is arranged so that it can, when soiled, be taken up and shaken.

In bedrooms and country-house parlors, mattings are never without a certain vogue. Each year shows new and improved designs in these textures. They are cool, can be washed with soap and water, and give a general air of freshness to a room. Rugs woven of matting, with borders, may be used on bedrooms and porches, and add much to the attractiveness of the latter, where a heavier rug is not to be employed.

CHAPTER XXII

THE FIREPLACE



“MY fire is my friend,” says Colonel Carter. “After it talks to me for hours, we both get sleepy together, and I cover it up with its gray blanket of ashes and then go to bed.”

“And I, likewise,” says Hawthorne in one of his exquisite essays, “I, to my shame, have put up stoves in kitchen and parlor and chamber.”

Old German -
chandelier.
made of antlers -
with a gayly
colored plaster figure in front.

Here the whole story is told. An open fire is a friend, a homely comforting friend of cheerful presence and genial moods, content “to

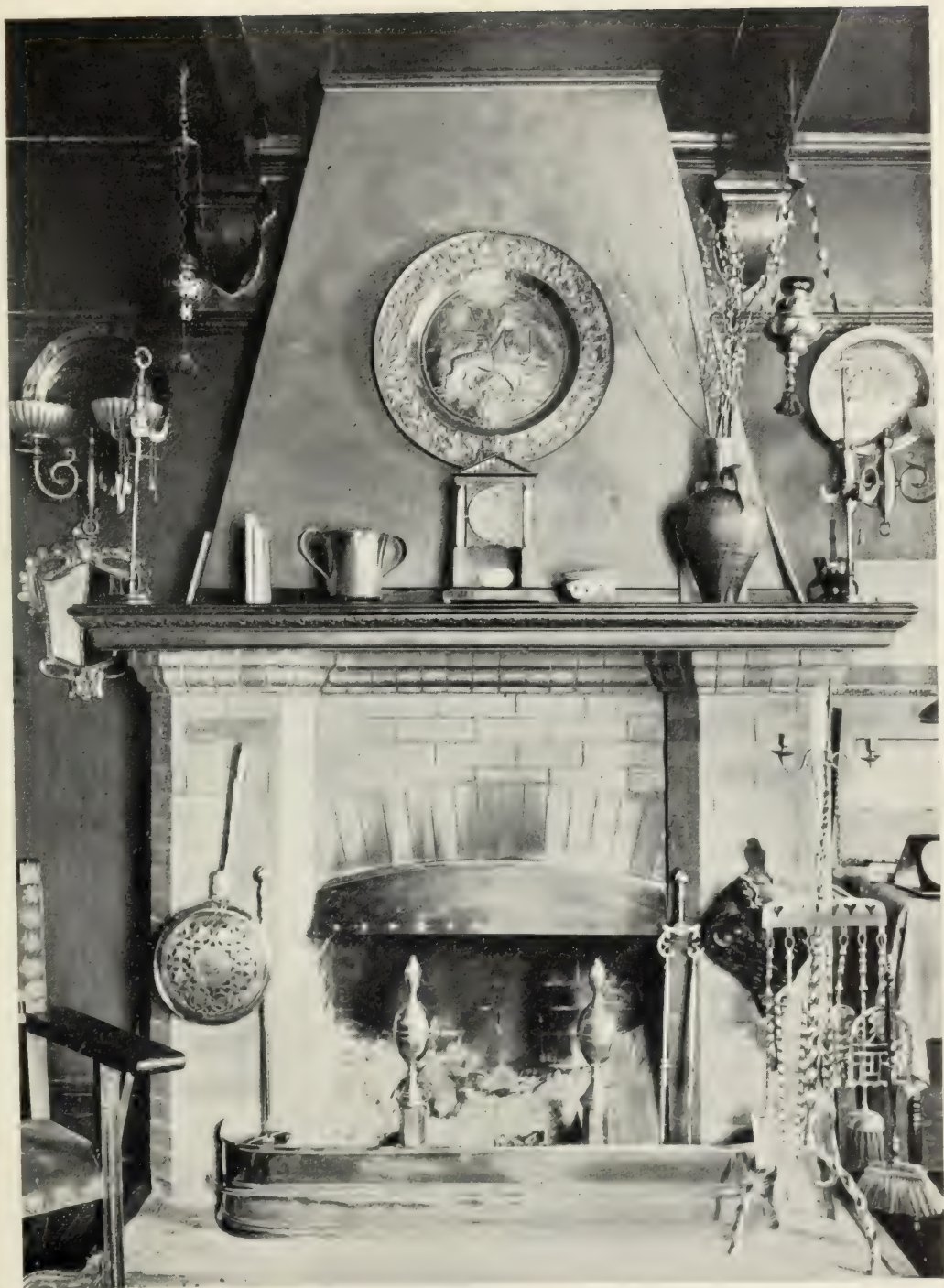
dwell day after day, and one long lonesome night after another, on the dusky hearth, only now and then betraying his wild nature by thrusting his red tongue out of the chimney-pot.” And certainly we sin against this elemental spirit when we banish him, when we “put up stoves,” or think to improve our condition with hot-air registers cut in the wall,

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

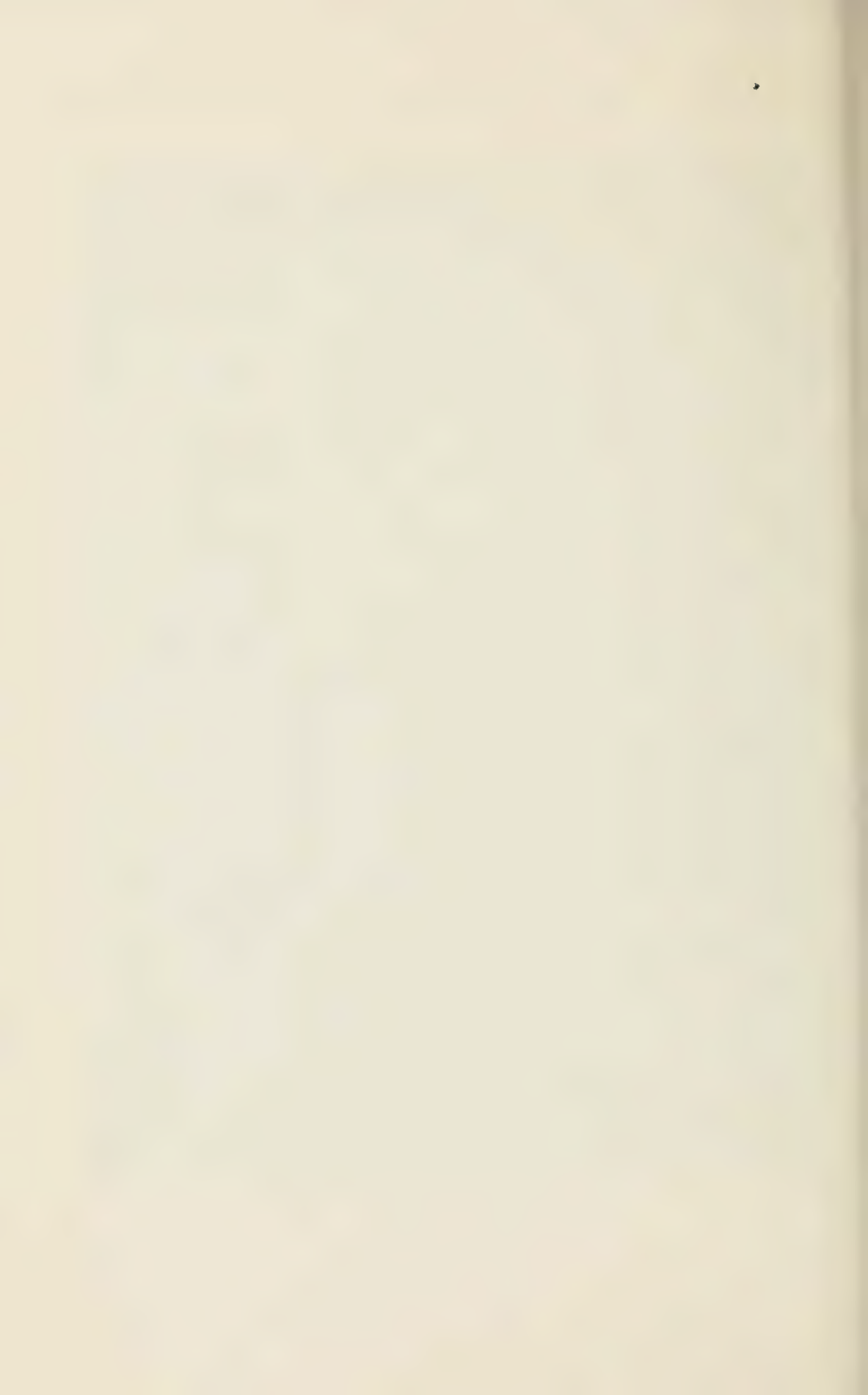
or coils of steam piping under the window-sills. And quite as certainly, too, those who sin against the sentiment of the open fire are branded. The fire-lover knows them at once. When I first left a land in which hickory was burned every day on the hearth, I could recognize at a glance those who knew nothing of "honest old logs." I knew them by their sallow complexions, their dried skins, the complexions of those who have hovered over registers when they wanted to keep warm.

What benignant influences these people had missed! And the poor babies — the children of these offenders — babies who had never been rocked before a nursery fender, nor soothed to sleep on windy winter nights by the dropping of hot cinders one by one, like shooting stars, from the coals of the open grate into the bed of sizzling ashes in a pan below. They have been defrauded, these children, like the little ones to whom no sweet fairy-stories have ever been told.

We certainly lost our heads not so many years since, in our joy of labor-saving devices. The country householder was as pleased over the contrivance for heating her house without the bother of replenishing an extra fire as her husband was by some new and improved implement which would save him the price of an extra man on his farm. In town, the case was only worse, for there were servants in plenty to attend to the fires. It was the worry about curtains that shut up the chimneys, — as though fires made half the dust of other modern



“MY FIRE IS MY FRIEND”



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improvements, of subways and asphalt and elevated trains puffing the smoke of soft coal straight into some of our windows.



Fireplace with cast over it.

When the passion for registers and steam was at its height, town houses, to be sure, were built with chimneys, but they were chimneys that were never made to draw. Fireplaces, too, were set up in due

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form in the middle walls of front parlors with properly appointed mantel-shelves above and open spaces below. But woe to the householder who attempted to light a log. The only exit for the smoke was over her best parlor furniture, past her curtains, and so on through her windows and out into the street.

In the new apartments of the day, renting from fifteen hundred dollars or more a year, a fire-lover may search in vain for anything else but gas logs. These are better than nothing. They at least give color. But that "quick and subtle spirit, whom Prometheus lured from heaven to civilize mankind," — that quick and subtle spirit — is not present.

In the new houses, of course, and particularly in those done by our best architects, the fireplace has been revived, not only with the beauty belonging to it in the early history of our country, but with much of the splendor and magnificence which distinguished many of the fireplaces of foreign castles and old feudal halls. Fireplaces indeed are often purchased entire from impecunious inheritors of old estates and put up in our American homes.

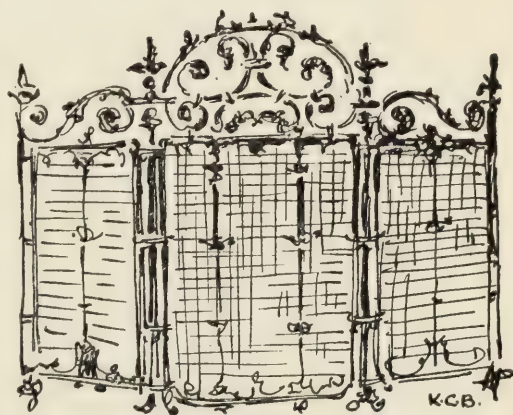
No man of means in these days dreams of building a house without having made a careful study of his chimney-piece and insisting that it be an important feature. He knows that an open fire in a room is what a beautiful view is to a window. He cannot afford to ignore it. We have learned much during the last generation. Men and women who

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have travelled, thought, or read, those men and women who have never had traditions about fires to preserve, nor clung to them, as some have, through poverties and disasters, would be ashamed nowadays to ignore the refining influences of the fire, or to be without an open hearth in some one at least of their chambers. "The good taste and *savoir faire* of the inmates of a house may be guessed from the means used for heating it," says one writer on the subject.

Chimney-pieces, as we understand them, were unknown in Europe before the middle ages. When they began to be seriously considered by the builders of the Renaissance, they were looked upon as an architectural feature of the room, and the importance of giving an architectural character to the chimney has been insisted upon by all the most distinguished authorities on that subject since that day.

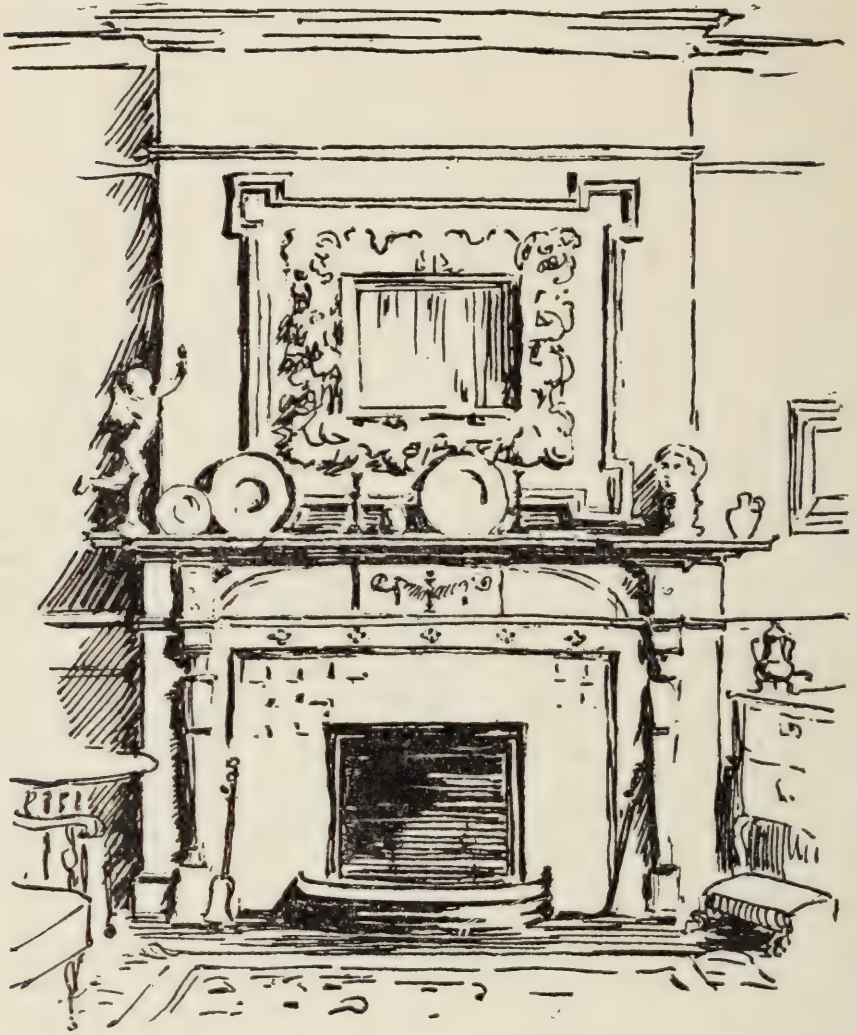
These fireplaces were sometimes of enormous size. In the Château of Pierrefonds twelve or sixteen life-size figures stand over the fire-opening, with decorations above. One of them is a portrait of the Empress Eugénie. From the other end of the hall these figures seem hardly more than a row of statuettes arranged at the base of the over-mantel. Some



Design for wrought iron fence.

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of the chimney-pieces of Europe are as well known among art lovers as pictures. The architects of to-

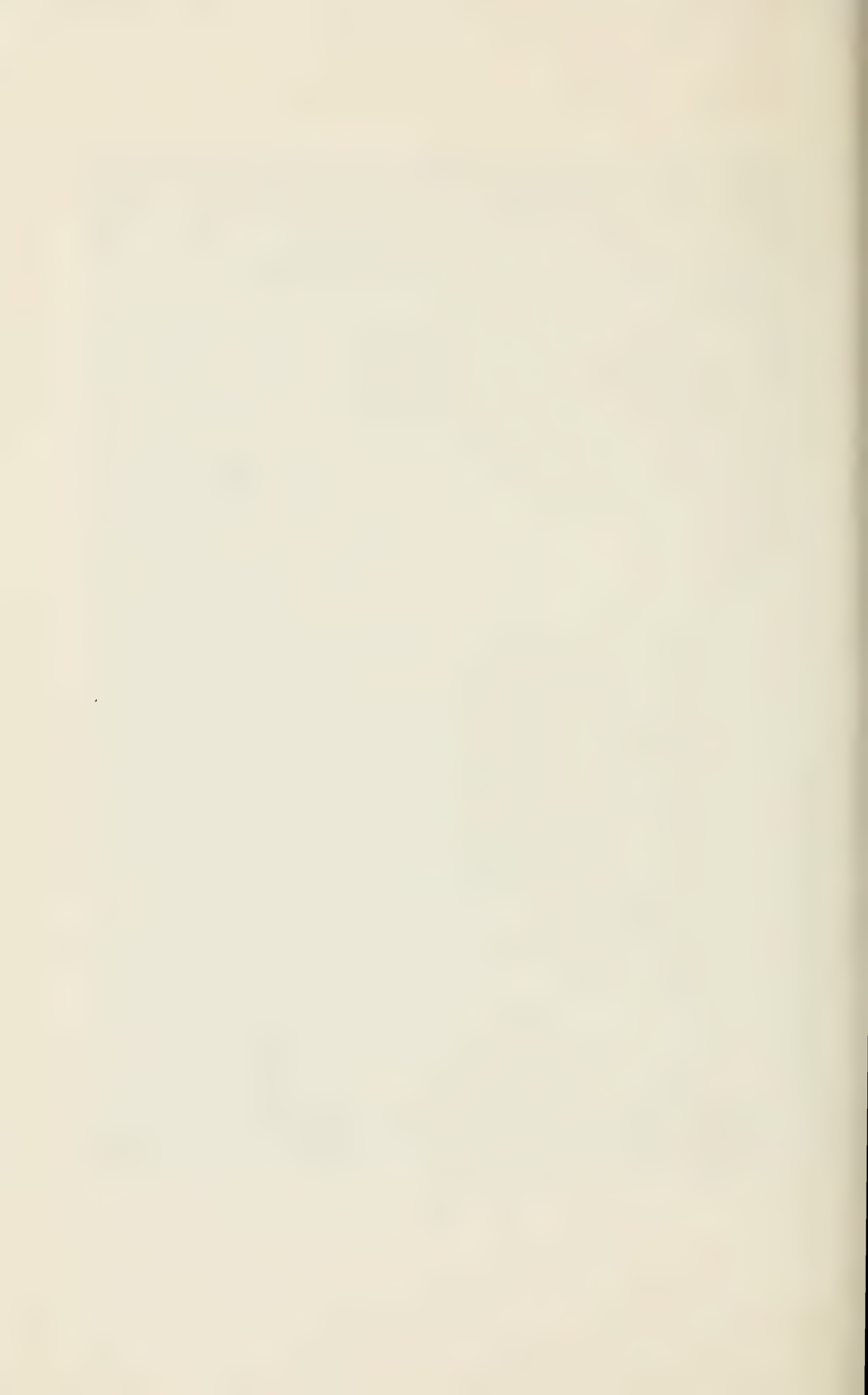


A Colonial Fireplace.

day go to them for their models, but these sumptuous creations belong only to certain interiors. They would be impossible in ordinary houses, their imita-



“FIREPLACES WERE SOMETIMES OF ENORMOUS SIZE”



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tions out of place in conventional drawing-rooms. The simpler forms, those of Italian and French houses, are copied in our smaller houses, and the rest of the room is then brought into key with them. The beautiful and simple mantelpieces known in every-day parlance as the "Colonial," are always looked upon with especial favor.

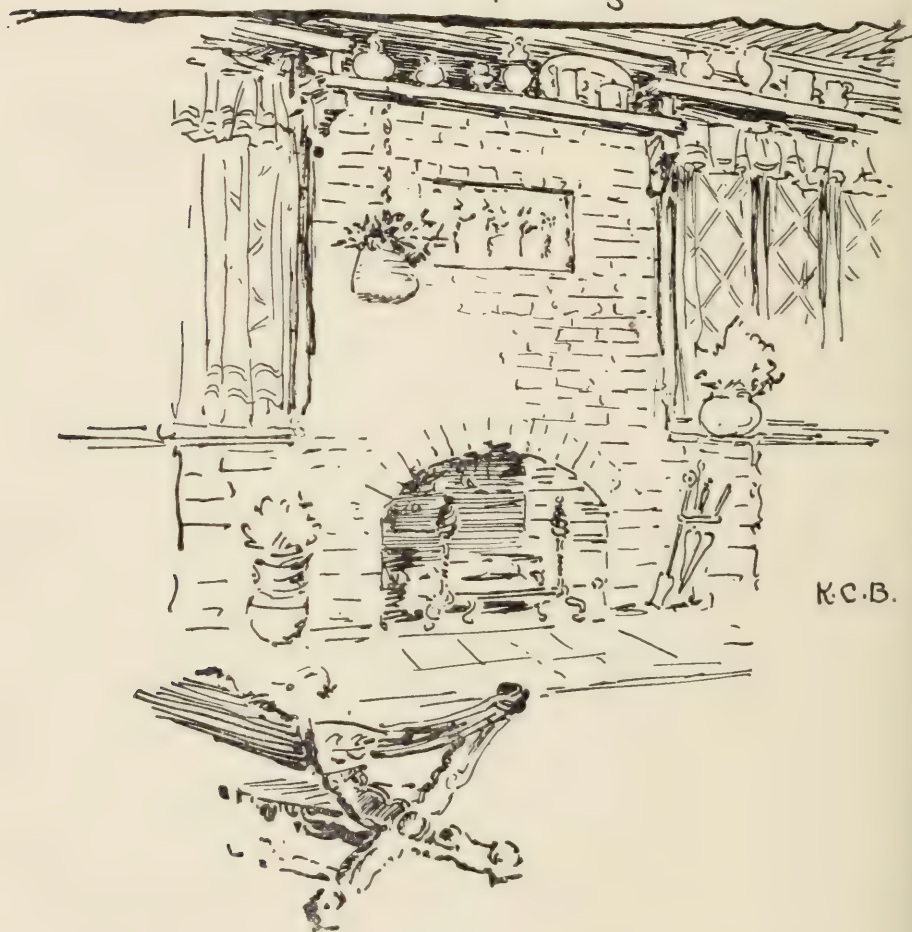
In the ordinary brown stone or brick house, and in most of the smaller country places, the mantelpiece is a conventional arrangement of marble or wood, enclosing a fire-opening and surmounted by a shelf. No attempt at architectural excellence has been attempted. But even this ugly affair is infinitely to be preferred to the horrors of "over-mantels" with inlaid mirrors which seem to be entered on the list of specifications made by the builder of every modern apartment house or "villa" advertised "for sale or for rent." These over-mantels, as I suggested in another chapter, should be taken down at once. In almost every instance such a piece of construction is a monstrosity.

According to well-defined architectural laws the top of a chimney-piece must be carried to the cornice, as are the tops of the door and window openings. All the great fireplaces are designed in this way, whether the chimney-piece is made to project into the room, or the fire-opening is sunk in the wall. In building up over our conventional mantelshelves, therefore, we must be governed by the same laws. Thus a plain wall surface over the mantel which has no architectural features may be hung

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with a plaster cast, a mirror, or a picture, and still be made subservient to established rules. It is only necessary to preserve the proportions, to build up, as it were, toward the cornice. It makes all the

Fireplace in a country cottage



difference in the world, for instance, whether the mirror that is hung over the mantelpiece is a couple of inches too high or too low. It makes much difference, too, even when the proportions

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are respected, if the mirror is hung so high that nobody can look into it or see one of its reflections.

When an architect has designed a fireplace there is little left for the householder to do. A certain conventional fashion must be followed, and the appointments of the period to which the fireplace belongs must be repeated. Louis XVI ornaments must decorate a Louis XVI mantel.

A Colonial mantel cannot be trifled with, neither draped nor overcrowded with trifles. Its formality and its simplicity of line must be respected. Things that are arranged above it must always show a balancing of ends, and a due consideration for the central point of excellence.

It is the every-day marble or wood mantelpiece that never ceases to be a subject of concern to a householder. It never seems right. It seldom is so. She thinks to remedy it to-day by a drapery, to-morrow by sweeping it clean of everything. She is never sure of what the drapery should be, whether it should tone with the upper or lower part of a room, whether it should be looped or "put on plain." It remains forever an unsolved problem.

The arrangement of a mantel must depend on the height of the mantel-shelf. A shelf on which an elbow can be rested as one stands by the fire invites certain touches of familiarity. Intimate relations are at once established, governed entirely by a question of its configuration. The elbow is the standard by which we measure much.

When a shelf lies just above the reach of it, the

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

mantel instantly commands for itself a certain deference and assumes an air which alters our manner.

We can set out the lower shelf with a book or two; in some houses with a pipe; in some dining-rooms with a bottle of red wine; in any house with a flower, with things that we love, things that we can pick up and put down. But the high shelf demands a certain reserve. We can look, but we must not touch.

The first thing to be done in arranging a mantel is to choose what the over-mantel shall be. The perfectly plain wall-space may be treated with a simple moulding of wood or stucco in which a picture is set. It may have no moulding and be hung only with a picture, generally one's most important or most interesting or best-beloved picture. It may have a mirror, it may have a bas-relief hung against the wall, or if the lines be too sharp, against a piece of silk gathered in on a rod just under the picture-moulding, and falling straight to the shelf — not a looping of any kind, else the effect is destroyed.

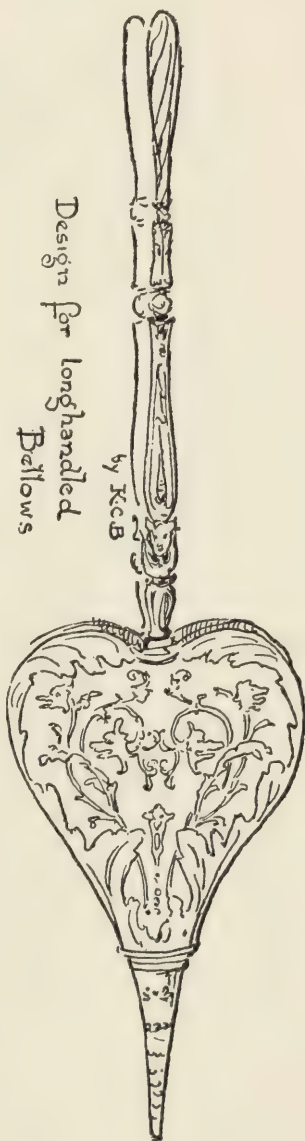
The shape and size of the wall-space above the shelf must determine the shape and size of the mirror, cast, or picture-frame hung there. If the over mantel be square and the mirror or picture be long and narrow, the space above must be filled, and in filling it, in whatever is done, in fact, the laws of balance and proportion must be preserved. If, for instance, the space to be filled is square or nearly so, and the moulding makes a frame for a picture, one rule, that of centring the interest, is obeyed.

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But if there be no moulding, a certain suggestion of building up toward the cornice, of making an apex, must be given. The central picture should be higher than the others, or something should be placed over the middle of the picture. This must not be done with too obvious a manner, as when one hangs a painted plaque over the very nail on which a picture is suspended. For the picture itself, taken in line with either side of the mantel, may suggest the lines which go to form the apex. Or again, an object placed on the shelf over the picture may suggest the same line of construction.

Nothing hung over the mantel should be longer than the mantel itself.

When one is in doubt about the appointments for a mantel-shelf, a pair of candlesticks and a plaster cast, and something to hold flowers will prove the safest investment. These may vary in character and quality. The candlesticks may be of brass, or glass, or silver, but whatever their nature they should always be filled with candles and lighted whenever possible. Candle-light conveys an impression of refinement that neither gas nor electricity can ever hope to em-



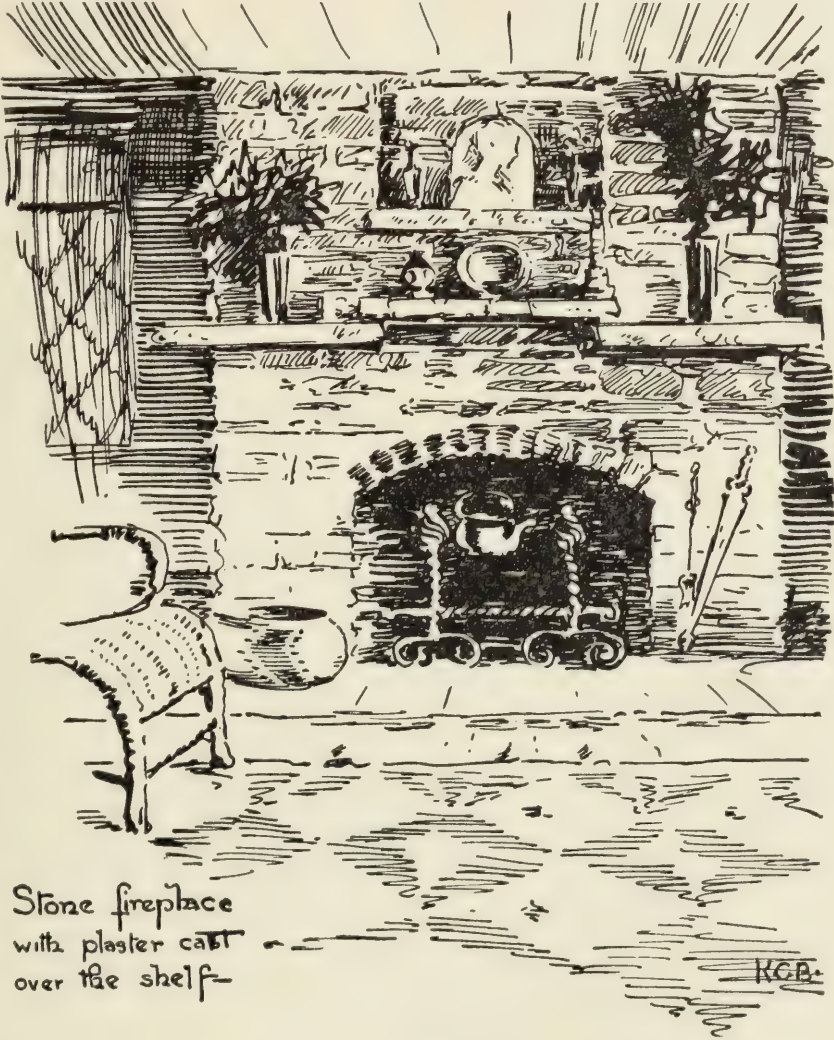
HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

ulate. Besides, it is becoming. People look best by candle-light; so do most stuffs and many pictures. A mantel-shelf with candles, then, and flowers, needs nothing else to be attractive and interesting and proper.

When a drapery is a necessity, or when a householder thinks so, which amounts to the same thing, no law of arrangement can be laid down, although one positive statement can always be made. Nothing is so objectionable as a mantel-shelf to which an upholstered look has been given by pieces of cretonne or woollen stuff, fringed and draped, caught up at the corners with bows and rosettes, and made a general receptacle for dust. In some rooms a piece of heavy lace over a color is not so objectionable when nailed perfectly flat. A piece of stuff, a corduroy, or a velveteen with gimp, is admissible without gathers, nailed flat. A piece of stuff laid over the mantel-board and allowed to fall in natural folds is unpretentious, serves a certain purpose, and is therefore admissible. A piece of brocade in certain environments, or of embroidery when laid over a shelf with the obvious intention of introducing a note of color or of relieving an impression of bareness, is also at times most effective. But to employ any stuff or material over a mantel implies, in the very nature of things, that the mantel itself is ugly, and that the householder has been obliged to do something to relieve its unpleasantness. No exquisitely carved mantel could be so dishonored, certainly none of fine marble.

ROOMS AND THEIR DECORATION

in choosing a color for the drapery, that of the wall and of the hangings must be taken into consideration. If with dark walls and a black marble



fireplace a light cover is introduced, the effect is that of a light streak breaking the line of the wall. Then the decoration becomes too obvious, and loses such little quality as it might have been made

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to possess. It is better to build up from the lower or the floor-color, making the cover as inconspicuous as possible.

The material of which a curtain is made is often the best and only lambrequin possible for the mantels of certain rooms. The French use it in this way, repeating on the mantel-shelf the form of the lambrequin over the window. When this is done, the best taste inclines to a formal arrangement of the material, bound with gimp and nailed on a board.

The hideous white marble mantel found at one time in every town house, the country over, is one of the most objectionable objects in a room. If it cannot be removed, it should certainly be painted to match the wall, especially when the walls are dark.

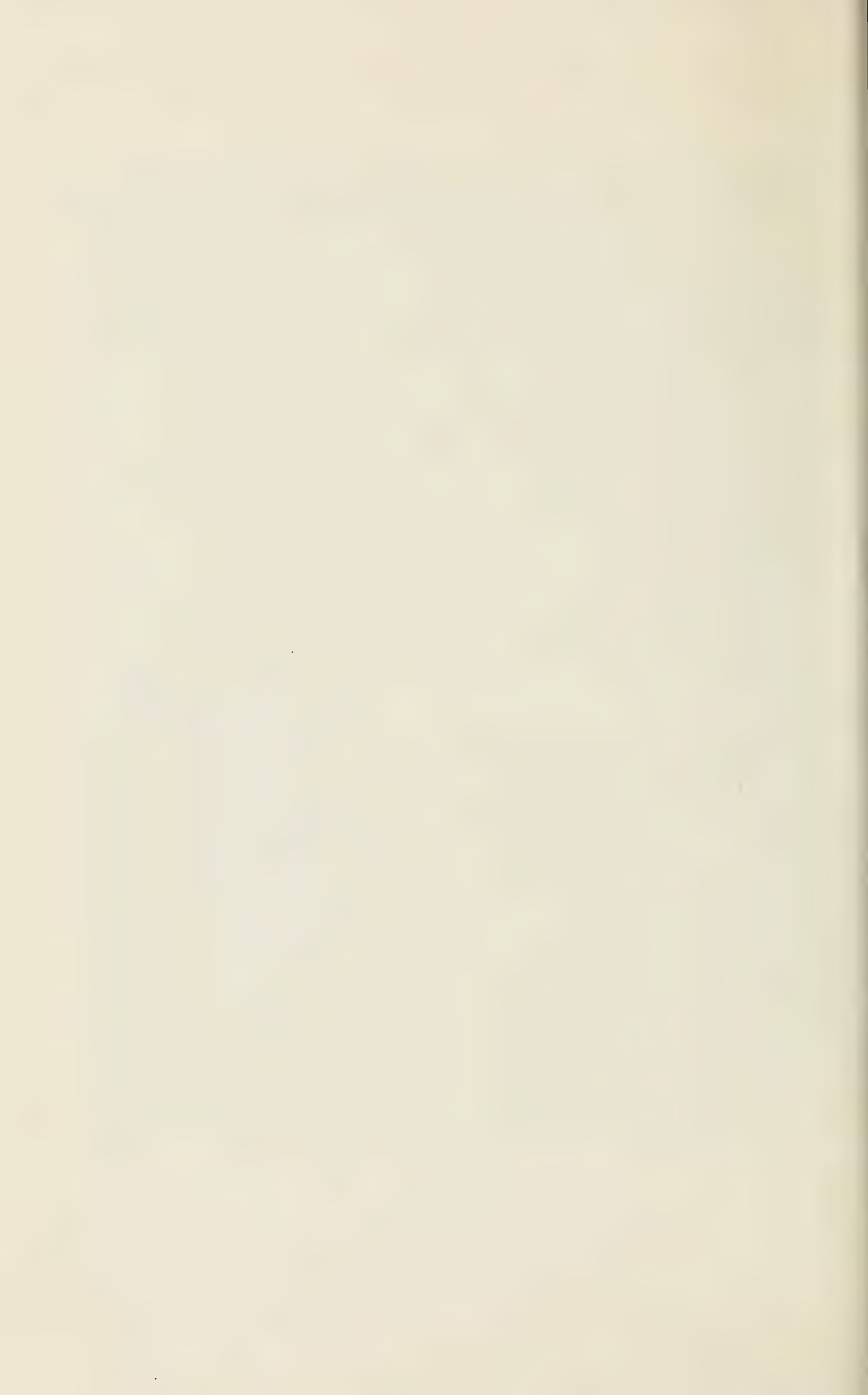
The most fascinating of all the fireplaces of the day are those built in holiday retreats. Though made of rough stones, they invariably express some individual sentiment or the taste of the householder. They are of course not for an instant to be compared in architectural beauty or excellence of detail to the finer fireplaces of our more sumptuous new houses, but they are more fascinating and more individual, for all that, and express a sincerity of purpose that many of the finer pieces lack — that sincerity which means having been built with a defined and a lovable purpose, and not because it seemed the proper thing to do.

These rough stone fireplaces generally project



MANTELPieces DIRECTLY OVER EACH OTHER IN THE SAME APARTMENT
HOUSE

(SEE ILLUSTRATIONS OPPOSITE PAGES 332 AND 334)



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into the room, which makes the possibility of nooks all about them. When a projection of eight or ten feet is made into a large living-room, as is done in some country places, one side of the room is practically divided in two, making it possible to have two



An Old English Fireplace.

distinct centres of interest, one on either side, one side being devoted to writing, the other, quite hidden from it, arranged with divans and low cushioned seats for reading and lounging undisturbed.

In some instances the hearth is made to fall a foot or two below the level of the floor, in this way form-

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ing a step which can be cushioned or covered with a rug, and on which, on story tellers' nights, groups of old and young can gather together.

Another fashion is to have seats drawn up at right angles on either side, wooden settles that have been cushioned and made comfortable. Sometimes small square stone seats are built on either side of the fire-opening, large enough to hold one person, or logs for the fire. The whole purpose is to make a hearth round which all the indoor interests may centre.

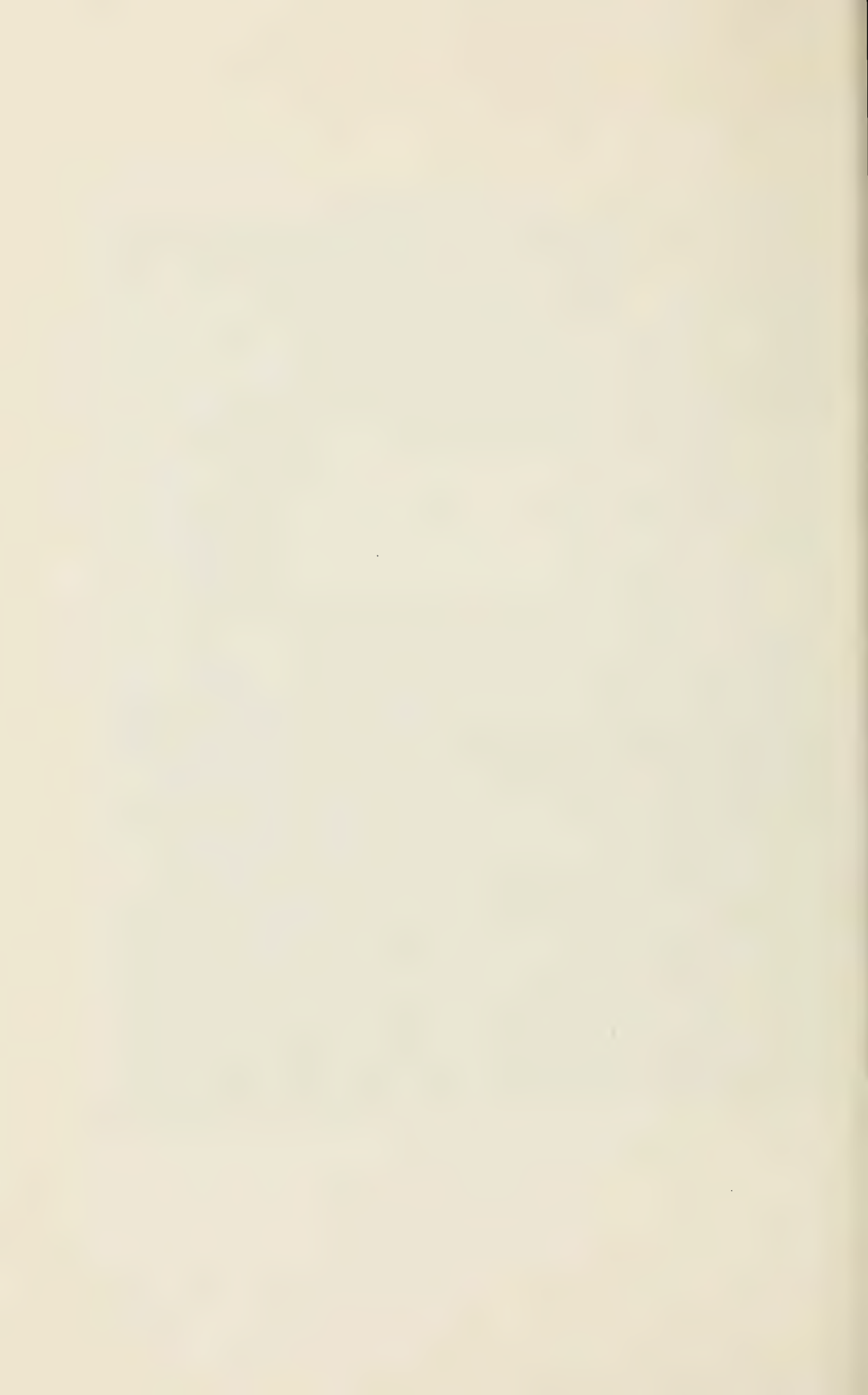
The decorations of these fireplaces always obey the laws of a rigid simplicity. One will show brass candelabra, another a plaster cast of beauty, something worth looking at when the eye is raised. Green branches from neighboring woods are shown in pots, or wild-flowers in vases. Sometimes a deer's head is seen, but nothing is introduced on the shelf or recess out of key with the surroundings, nothing like a Dresden china image or a piece of crystal; no photographs in silver frames; no pictures, in fact. Bronzes, pottery, clay, or plaster alone appear. These fireplaces are simplicity itself, but, oh, the cheer and the charm of some of them!

No one who has been accustomed to a Franklin stove will ever swerve in loyalty from it. In many places where the building of an open fireplace is an impossibility, these Franklins not only serve every purpose in giving out heat and cheerfulness, but they add a delightful quality to a room which otherwise might have been bare and inhospitable. They



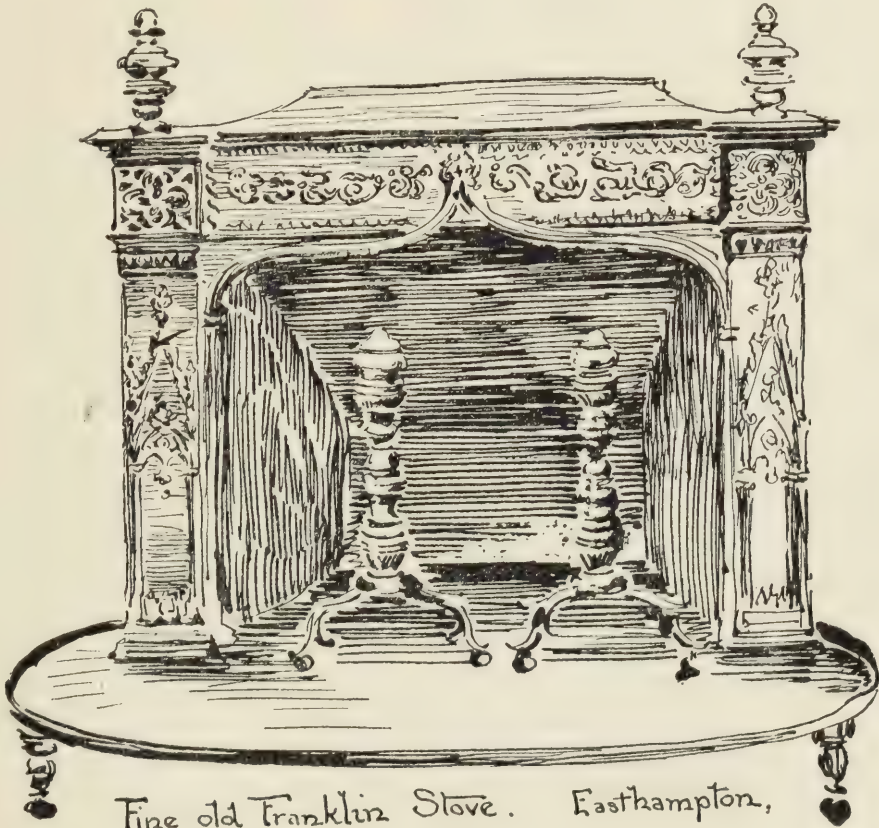
MANTELPieces DIRECTLY OVER EACH OTHER IN THE SAME APARTMENT
HOUSE

(SEE ILLUSTRATIONS OPPOSITE PAGES 330 AND 334)



HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

give out even greater heat than an ordinary fireplace, since they should stand out in the room, the heat radiating from every side. When there is a fireplace like that in the illustration, and the room is too small to lend itself to a more generous treat-



Fine old Franklin Stove. Easthampton,

ment, the Franklin may be pushed in under the shelf. The three fireplaces, of which this is one, are introduced to prove the point so often insisted upon, that, given the same wall-space and configuration in the rooms of houses or apartments, the effects produced need never be monotonous.

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The three mantelpieces shown are directly over each other, in the same apartment house.

The andirons, shovels, tongs, fender, and coal-scuttles may be of ormolu, brass, bronze, or iron. They are of all kinds and descriptions, and when interesting, add enormously to the distinction of special firesides. The shovel and tongs are generally placed upright against the mantelpiece, supported often by a brass hook fastened to the side.

Many persons prefer iron for firearms, since no trouble is involved in keeping them clean, but a lover of color must always prefer brass — brass that is polished every week. Half the fascination of a fire on a winter night comes from the play of a flame, with a thousand reflections, which fill the round knobs of brass andirons till one who looks on seems almost to be gazing into seas and deeps of vibrant flame and color.

Every open fireplace should be amply supplied with fuel. The coal should be in a scuttle of brass or of bronze ; the wood in some receptacle. Straw wood baskets are always in order. Dutch carved wooden cradles are sometimes used,—a hideous desecration, I think. An old carved chest, copper and brass cauldrons, sometimes bits of pottery, are all introduced. Sometimes bits of pottery are used to hold the pieces of kindling-wood.

It is not unusual to see a text of some kind introduced in old lettering round the fire-opening ; in some families these texts are guarded like traditions, handed from father to son. Great offence is given



MANTELPieces DIRECTLY OVER EACH OTHER IN THE SAME APARTMENT
HOUSE

(SEE ILLUSTRATIONS OPPOSITE PAGES 330 AND 332)

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when such a text is copied by some one having no claim upon it. But there are some on which every one may have a claim.

Thus, there are these : —

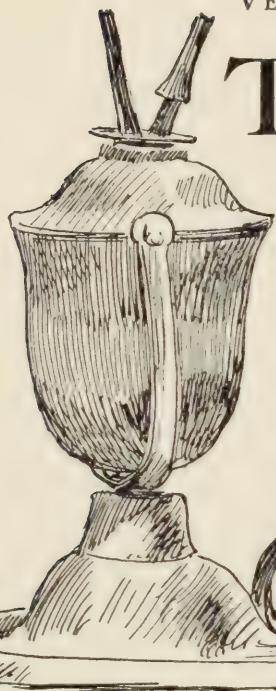
“Aha! I am warmed, I have seen the fire.”

“The sacred trust of the household fire.”

“In winter’s tedious nights sit by the fire.”

CHAPTER XXIII

VERANDAS, LOGGIA, AND BALCONIES



Ship's lamp standing on a table.

THE terrace, — the exquisitely appointed, the beautifully designed, the wonderfully proportioned terrace, with its marble urns, its carved balustrades, its flowers, its statues, its fountains, the open-air living-room, the garden of delight, the wealth, as it becomes civilized, creates for itself, — such a terrace is beyond the reach of the multitude.

To possess them, one must have land and space and many dollars. The wonder is only, that those with lands and dollars have built so few. Those which our country possesses, exquisite as some of them

may be and are, have only been laid out within comparatively recent years. Somewhere in the late eighties they began to appear.

It should go without saying that an architect must be employed in their creation. Now and then only is a householder equipped by knowledge and observation to lay one out for himself.

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The balcony, the loggia, the veranda, are all within the scope of limited talents and means. The ugliest and simplest of balconies or porches can be made interesting and livable with awnings and flowers, a rug or two, and some comfortable chairs. But a terrace, that very acme of refinement and good taste on a country estate, to be beautiful, cannot represent the haphazard attempts of the amateur.

The simpler form of terrace is a paved court protected by a stone coping or balustrade surmounted with flowers ; thus one may have a brick floor and coping, the only floral decorations being rows of geraniums in pots at regular intervals, and for shade large awnings of plain green denim. When these are rolled back, on cool summer days, the sun can reach and warm the paving. Another will be shaded by awnings or draped canvas in some one corner, while the steps that lead to the lawn may lead from either side of a projection set with stone seats covered with rugs. Or, again, the terrace will be protected by an arbor, over which the vine of the grape or the wistaria or the rose has been trained. These simpler forms run into elaborate creations of great beauty, in which marble and carved stone are introduced, and in which the art of the sculptor and the taste of the flower-lover are displayed in all their luxuriance.

Beautiful as these terraces are, their charm would be absolutely destroyed were they treated as parks, thrown open to every person who chose to ring at

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

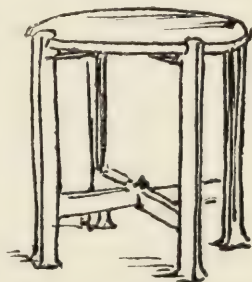
the front door. They represent a private domain. Like one's dining-rooms, they are reserved for the family and its invited guests. In this they prove their right to be regarded as flowers of civilized domestic architecture. It is only with this suggestion of privacy that the final stamp of excellence is given, and it is the lack of this suggestion which makes so many verandas objectionable. Curiously enough, we as a people have been a long time in learning this. Even new houses, costing several hundreds of thousands, will often show a huge veranda on which the family hammocks are hung, the tea-tables and lounging chairs set out. The worst of it is, that they are built around the only door to which visitors leaving a card can be driven, so that endless embarrassment ensues. The visitor, if she be young and shy, does not want to run the blockade of a dozen or more eyes all turned in her direction; neither, if she be sensitive, does she want to know that half the family have scampered away at her approach, because they were not attired to receive her, — though of this she may know nothing, as she catches a glimpse of retreating figures, or hears, as she draws near, ejaculations of surprise and hurried steps of departure. All of this makes the ordinary veranda of our country places absolutely objectionable, and the mental attitude of the householder a mystery. One can only wonder at it all, and why it is, with all the old-world examples to draw upon, so few people build loggias, or balconies, or upstairs verandas for lounging.

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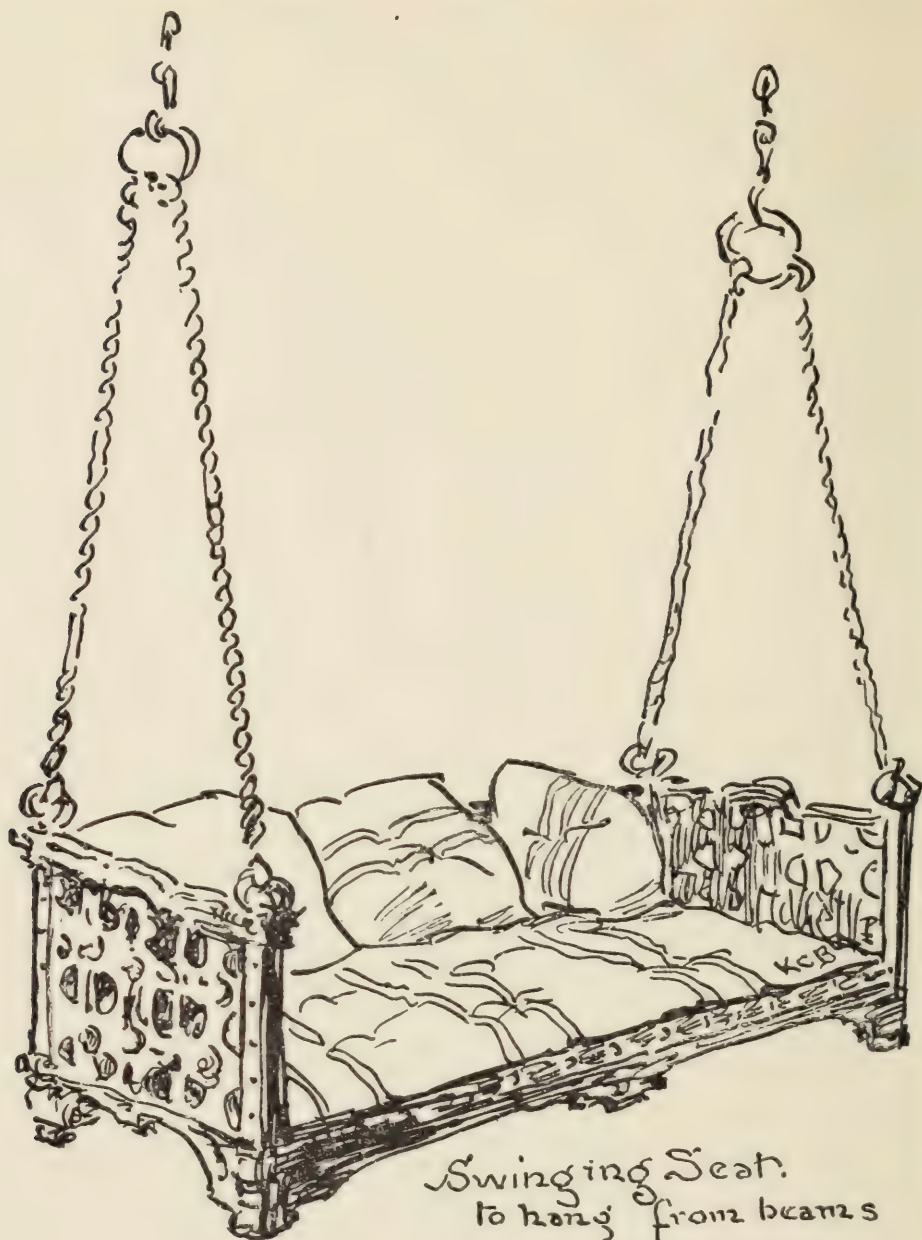
Country house after country house is constructed, and there is no sign of this out-door retreat on the bedroom floor, no place on which one can lie and be comfortable out of doors, can read or write, take one's morning coffee or nap at intervals, indifferent to the crunch of carriage wheels on the gravel of the driveway. To small houses these loggias add the same compelling note of refinement that the terrace adds to the larger and more elaborate dwellings, that indescribable air of refinement, indeed, which one is apt to find only among the more highly developed. If I had my way, I should not only have a loggia in every house, but a separate loggia for every bedroom, and especially for every guest-room.

And they are so easy to arrange, these loggias — a rug, a hammock, an awning, perhaps, a Japanese screen, a table, and flowers — always flowers, of course. Flowers are to loggias what a fireside is to a room or what logs are to a fire. Then when a bench or a chair is added, all is done. But the comfort of them, the seclusion, the security, the charm, and the good-breeding of them! No hurry-scurry when a visitor approaches, no apologies — only perfect freedom and absolute delight.

In certain places in the mountains the habit of sleeping on loggias has grown within the last few years. Even children of six are put to bed there, for unless the door into the house is open, there are



Well constructed
Table, 2'0" high



Swinging Seat.
To hang from beams
over piazza.

no draughts on the loggia, which is only open to the air in front. There is no danger of cold, and with plenty of blankets one is even more comfort-

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

able than indoors. The thermometer can be as low as forty without discomfort to a child, and the most restless and wakeful of children, who toss all night in a nursery, will sleep without moving with the cool, crisp air of the hills all about them.

Whenever there is a covered porch or veranda below, and a window above, something answering to a loggia can be made. In one instance, the roof of a little porch over the front door was taken possession of, the window of the bedroom cut to the floor to form a door. As the sun was needed in winter, awnings and Japanese screens were made to inclose it, pots of geraniums were set out, and straw furniture impervious to the damp was used.

Of all these loggias, none are so fascinating as those which look directly into the branches of great trees, or in which a favorite tree has been made part of the construction ; but this ideal, of course, can only be attained in country houses. To look into the very centre of the tree, indeed, over a foreground of red geraniums set out on the railing, and with a suggestion of mountains or of water beyond, is to know the secret of repose and of unruffled sweet content.

For some reason, we Americans do not take kindly to balconies. We fancy that our climate stands in the way, and that in large towns those who sit on them are in too much evidence from the street. We forget how much more habitable and delightful they would make our town houses in the late spring, how much they would do for the man of the house forced

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to stay in town during the blasting heat of the summer, and how much they would add to the lives of our children in winter.

We are attempting roof gardens here in New York, even on our private houses, but they have to be carefully thought out and planned, since the pipes used for ventilating the drains are apt to open just by the chimneys, and to make a roof not only unpleasant but unhealthy as a lounging-place.

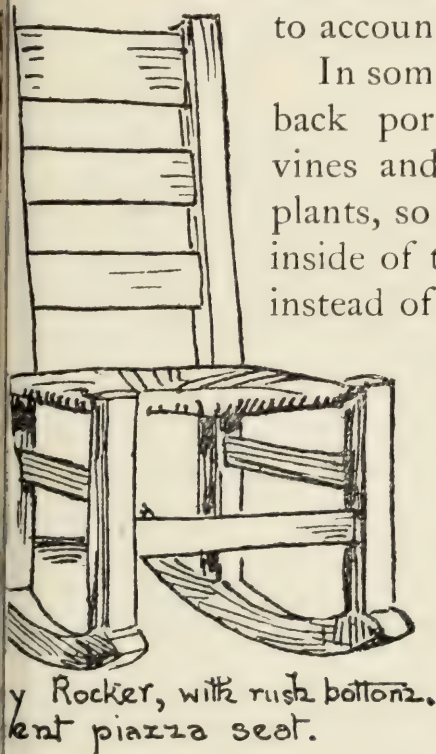
A balcony, even when it opens out from the parlor, and is near the street, can be made delightful with awnings and flower-boxes. Privacy can always be assured by a heavy curtain of English ivy falling from the box set out from the railing. I have one in mind as I write, a balcony that is the envy of every passer-by in summer. The mother, who planned its general lay-out, is never without her stalwart young sons in attendance. She is a wise woman.

I know still another balcony. Few passers-by have discovered it. It is built of finely wrought iron of charming design and hangs just under the eaves of a five-story brown stone house—such an aerie of a balcony, so tucked away, so inaccessible, so comfortable, so absolutely secluded and out of reach of the doorbell, so safe from the intrusion of inquisitive eyes, yet from it one can see the East River on one side and the Hudson on the other.

We might have so many more of these aeries and retreats if we were only willing to try, so many more out of the way fresh air breathing places if we only

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knew how to utilize a bit of roof over a butler's pantry or an addition in the back of a house; if we only loved the sun enough, and knew how to catch and hold its rays in winter, and warm ourselves in it when the pavements were damp and the streets uncomfortable or impassable; or if we only cared enough for flowers and green things, and knew how to turn our old-fashioned back porches to account.



y Rocker, with rush bottom.
ent piazza seat.

In some of the old parts of town, these back porches have been covered with vines and set out with hammocks and plants, so that on the hottest days those inside of the house get a feeling of green, instead of blasts of hot air from scorching asphalt streets. The problem for the householder would be simplified if she remembered that permanent wooden roofs were not always necessary to verandas and improvised loggias. Awnings serve every purpose. They can be run up and down at every change of the barometer and rob a

house of no sun in winter.

What we call here in America the front piazza, a structure that with its roof often runs all around the first story of a house and sometimes only across one side, could easily have its roof flattened, hung with awnings, and made into a lounging place for a

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family upstairs. There is a town near New York, inhabited by well-to-do people, in which every fence has been removed that one grass plot may run into the other, and in which the front of every house has a front piazza, and every piazza has its family group, and every family group its various forms of recreation, — its reading and sewing and talking — always its talking, — so that as the stranger drives by he catches scraps of conversation floating out on an air that is filled with the buzzing of voices from scores of piazzas up and down the street. No attempt at seclusion is made. The young girl swings in the hammock; the young man smokes. The baby tries to crawl up and down the steps, some patient soul in attendance holding on to its white petticoats to prevent a fall. I saw only one piazza in this town in which anything had been done to distinguish it from its neighbors. The house itself was ugly enough, but the piazza made it the most interesting dwelling-place along the line. Green and white awnings were hung from the roof. On the railings there were boxes of red and white geraniums fastened, with vines falling over the rails. As these vines did not render the piazza eye-proof, Turkey red was nailed inside the railing. This red was hung again as curtains falling straight under the awnings, to be drawn back and forth at the option of the owner. There were other Turkey red curtains hung at the farther end of the piazza to shut it off. Straw tables, chairs, hammocks, bird-cages, and more flowers on stands and in big pots on the

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steps, completed the arrangements. Rugs covered the floor. Tea was served here in the afternoon, but all the world of passers-by was not admitted to the spectacle. When curtains are not desired on a porch and vines do not give sufficient privacy, hanging screens are used, made of Japanese straw. Venetian blinds are effective and serviceable.

Now and then the corner of a country piazza is enclosed in glass, so that a summer dining-room is made; but when this is done, it must not be supposed that what at times is called "a sun parlor" has been created. Every one who has been to certain resorts knows what a hideous place a "sun parlor" may be, — nothing more nor less, in fact, than a sitting-room near the street and open to the gaze of every pedestrian. In one town there is an avenue of them, each one filled with appointments more uninteresting than the other, — cheap chairs, dried flowers in china vases, lamps with painted glass globes, straw rocking-chairs tied with ribbons. Such a room or "sun parlor," if you prefer, should be treated with fresh flowers, not dried blossoms in china-ware. No ribbons should appear, no upholstery. Palms or rubber-trees should be arranged against the panes. The sun can shine through them or over them, which would only add beauty to the interior, since there are few things so lovely as the sunlight through green leaves. A family should not remain in evidence. A man or a woman who sits all day by a window looking out into the street, suggests the possession of a horizon so lim-

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ited that one's pity, not one's respect, is aroused. These "sun parlors" are never the places for a dining-room. One must dine in quiet when at home. Poor Marie Antoinette offended her French subjects when she insisted upon this privilege. We offend against good manners when we make no such insistence.

An out-door lounging place is never furnished except with stuffs or hangings that are not injured by the damp. Straw chairs and cotton materials are the safest. Care is taken in choosing a dye, since some, like the blue, have disagreeable odors when wet. Every year shows a marked improvement in the manufacture of grass cloths, cretonnes, and stamped cottons which come for the purpose. Navajo blankets, Indian hangings and embroideries, Egyptian stuffs used in dahabiyehs, make effective hangings and rugs for verandas or loggias in the mountains. These blankets are often laid over the benches. Anything brilliant and decorative and intended for out-door use is used. In the verandas of town houses and country places more formality is necessary, though awnings and flowers are the rule everywhere.

Bath-chairs, when lined with a cotton, make agreeable additions to the appointments of the veranda, especially to people sensible to draughts.

Of all the flowers used in the decorations, none is so hardy, nor so amiable, as the geranium. It lends itself alike to the windows and porches of rich and poor. When combined with a vine, it makes

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the prettiest and most satisfactory of boxes, whether in town or the country, except in places like the Adirondacks or the Canadian woods, where on porches it smacks too much of the manner of the town or the landed estate.

In the large country places, the hydrangeas take the place of the simple geranium. A question not only of latitude and longitude, but of special environment, must cover all decision in the matter of flowers and vines used in the decoration of verandas and loggias. A sure rule would incline a householder to the vine or the green of her particular neighborhood. In town she falls back on the geranium, or the seeds and plants bought from a florist.

There are hammocks furnished with mattresses which are excellent for keeping off the cold when autumn begins.

There should always be a separate set of wraps, cushions, rugs for the floor and rugs for the knees, especially provided for the veranda and kept exclusively for it, as they are for steamers and yachts, which are carried in every night, dried when damp, and which are always ready to use. Extra ones for visitors should never be neglected.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE LIGHTING OF A HOUSE

THERE are two points of view from which the subject of lighting must be considered, whatever the medium employed, whether gas, electricity, oil, or candles are used. There must always, for instance, come first the question of illumination, the giving of sufficient light to read and to live by. Often this is the only point with many persons. After this comes the question of color,

which to other people is the one question of paramount

importance, overtopping every other consideration, even that of having sufficient light to see by. It is because this question of color is demanding more and more attention that the proper shading of artificial lights has become so all-important to modern householders. Neither the hangings of their windows nor the covering for their walls occasion them more anxiety, for it is readily seen that a bad light may



An Electric Droplight from Belgium.

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not only destroy one's eyesight, but mar the effect of one's room as well. Even those not "sensitive" to color can be made to understand the difference in some lights by trying a simple experiment. Go, for instance, suddenly from one room in which there is a green shade on the gas-burner, into a room in which the gas globe is white, and at first it will seem that the second room is flooded with a yellow-pink light that is almost dazzling. The green glass of the first room has absorbed all the yellow rays. Yet ordinarily a white light takes the color out of a room and spoils the more delicate tones.

For beauty and charm and softness there is nothing like a candle. It is, as I said in some other place, always becoming. It never takes the color out of a room, and always adds a note of elegance to it. Even in a well-lighted room, the beam of a candle has a value of its own. It makes a new centre of brilliancy and a new set of shadows. A candle is always picturesque, too, because it always adds varieties of darks and lights on whatever its radiance falls. Many people think to gain the same effect with tiny lamps set with porcelain cylinders and shaped like candles. The quality of the light is never the same. There is a something, to be sure, added to a room when gas is used and the jets are turned down to mere points only as large as those made by small candles. But they do not take the place of candles, for with a candle there is a vibration, a color, a quality which nothing else

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can emulate. Brass sconces and candles about the walls of a room, and candles on tables and mantelshelves, put a room at once at its best. Turn up a gas-jet, protected by a white glass globe, and all the charm is dispelled. The color flees from sofa cushion and drapery, and a favorite tone in a picture takes on another hue. Nothing is the same. Next to the sunlight, indeed, the most beautiful of all lights is that of the candle.

The aim of the manufacturer or designer of any shade is to produce with gas, lamp, or electric light the softest and clearest tones, those that will not destroy the color of a room, afflict the eyes, nor clash with the general scheme. To accomplish this, they study to produce a shade which will look as well by day as by night, and which, for all its beauty of color and design, will not prevent the light from coming through with clear and steady radiance. This is done by a choice of materials and by many and careful experiments, and the success of certain women who have made the designing of lamp-shades their profession has been due to the fact that they neglected none of these points.

Present fashion demands that all the lamps or lights in any room shall follow one general scheme in both color and design. Variety is lent simply by the difference in sizes. Thus, if there is one Empire shade on a lamp, all the lights must be shaded by Empire shades, and all must reproduce the same colors and tones. The mixing of two or three fashions and periods in shades is as bad as

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the mixing of fashions anywhere else. In the country, where a lamp on the table is often unhappily a necessity, a larger lamp goes in the centre, and the small candle lamps at the four corners are made to match.

It would be idle to discuss with great detail special patterns in lamp-shades, since the fashion changes from year to year. There is this thing only to be said: No lamp-shade should be out of key with its environment. A shade of lace ruffles and flowers is inappropriate in a den or a library. Its very nature gives it an ephemeral value, and it can never be appropriate except in houses, the owners of which are able to rid themselves of it when shabby without a thought of its cost. Like all faded finery, these shades are objectionable the moment their first freshness disappears, and a room in which one of these old dusty lamp-shades is cherished has lost all its claim for respectability.

The Empire and the panelled shades have held their own for several years. The Empire shades sold in this country differ somewhat from those sold in Paris. The French shade is more like a band-box with the two ends knocked out. Ours have more of a slope. These shades are made of any and every material — silk, paper, chintz, and cretonne. Some are painted in water-colors, with roses and other flowers. Some have pictures set in them. Many are trimmed with ruchings of silk or a narrow band of gilt. The designs are often most elaborate.

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

When the Empire shade is made of silk it is finely pleated on the wires top and bottom, and the edges are finished with ruchings of silk to match. The silk can be white, pink, yellow, or cream. When cretonne is used on the Empire shade, it is put on straight, a narrow braid finishes it on the bottom; sometimes a fringe is used.

Although the fashion may change from season to season, the problem of colors never alters, and must always confront the householder. On some bronze lamps, cut metal shades are seen with colored silk linings. The plain linen shade, pleated and edged with silk fringe, has outlasted many whims and changes in taste. Sometimes the linen is plain; again it is stamped with a floral design. These lamp-shades suit many diverse conditions, and prove the most satisfactory purchase for everyday use.

A red lamp-shade is apt to offend. It lacks refinement. Yellow is the most satisfactory.

A good lamp or candle shade may be made of a flowered wall-paper, the border edged with gilt braid or trimmed with a ruching of tissue paper matching either a blossom or a sprig.

The lamp-shade of plain lace has never been altogether dethroned. Different colored silks are put under the lace, which is sometimes drawn plain over the color, and sometimes full. When it is used a lace edging takes the place of the fringe. The shapes of the frames vary. Like bonnet frames, they change from year to year. New frames can always be had and the lace fitted to them.

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An excellent shade is made of cut cardboard made up over thin white silk and trimmed with a fall of lace about the bottom. When there is electricity in the house, candelabra are often utilized for the mantel, the electric wires being made to run up the backs of the candlesticks, where they remain visible. Thus a pair of glass candelabra may be utilized on a mantel where the decoration of the rest of the room permits, the electric wire running up through the porcelain candle, and the light being shaded by white silk trimmed with thick white crystal fringe that is always scintillating. Electric lights, by the way, are used in many lamps which to all intents and purposes seem those of oil.

Exquisite pieces of bronzes are used for holding electric lights on tables, and many householders pride themselves on the collection of these picked up in the various parts of Europe.

When one has a chandelier interesting effects are produced by small perforated brass crowns set with pieces of glass, cut like jewels, placed about the burners, each jet being turned to a mere point.



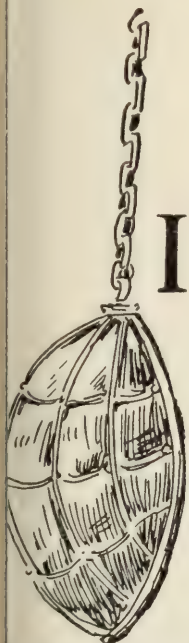
Small shade for a candle or gas jet. made of perforated brass with large "stage jewels" of glass set in the sides.

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

If no more specific directions are given about the choice for shades and the fashion for cutting them, it is because no one general rule can be laid down for their selection, except that which is covered by a question of its color. It often seems to me that there is no more difficult problem in a house than that of making its lights agreeable. A lamp suitable for one room will throw another out of key. The color used in an electric bulb must be quite different from that used over a gas-jet, since one light is white and the other yellow by comparison. It is only by constant study and experiment that the problem can be solved, and this study and these experiments are urged upon every householder if she would make her home interesting. What she should avoid are fluffy and millinery effects, as if spring bonnets had been under consideration, not lights. The designs for the lamps themselves even are not always good, and one must often search through many stores and establishments before a right selection can be made. There is always a dignity about a student lamp which no one can gainsay. The simpler the form of the lamp, the better, unless one can afford all the beauties and intricacies of elaborate and costly inlays and carvings, and even with these the eyes must be respected, and the quality of the light studied.

CHAPTER XXV

PICTURE HANGING AND FRAMING



Electric droplight
with melon-shaped
shade of leaded
green and blue glass
is suspended before
fine picture throws
the light directly on
while the stained
glass shields the eyes
(Side view.)

IT is quite thirty years — and I've not forgotten it yet — since the framed photograph of a young woman hung between the two front windows of a conventional long and narrow parlor — the very long and very narrow parlor of a house in a certain city block. Such a modest, shrinking, sweet young woman — she of the picture! It seemed unkind to have placed her there, the only picture on all that bare expanse of wall; unkind not to have given her some encouragement or support. I discovered afterward that at school this young girl and the owner of the house had been room-mates. I've always believed that this photograph, four by five, was the only picture the mistress of the mansion possessed. I can remember after all these years just how the frame looked, made up of pieces of finely fluted wood that projected at the corners like a cross.

Framed photographs and crayons of the family or of friends are out of place on the walls of a parlor, except in rare instances. Within the past few years the fashion has grown of having photographs

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of people framed in silver or gold, or circlets of rhinestones and brilliants, or in embroidered damask or brocade and covered with glass; but these pictures are not put up on the parlor walls unless at times a group of them is made in some one place, over a sofa or a writing-table, the fact of their being grouped suggesting in itself a well-defined purpose. A grouping of miniatures in this way, especially over some old-fashioned mantelpieces, is most interesting at times. Ordinarily, however, that to which we pay the distinction of a place on our walls must have some merit of its own apart from its sentiment. Some of us besides have a natural shrinking from putting the photographs of those we love on the walls for every one to look at. A portrait is another affair. The work of the painter then assumes an importance which overbalances the question of personal sentiment.

Unless one has a single great picture for which a special place has been made, as over a fireplace or an altar, no picture is hung to stay. The acquisition of a new painting will necessitate the rehanging of all. Moreover, some of us outgrow the pictures that at one time we thought beautiful, and are glad to replace them, or to live with bare wall-spaces instead. There are certain pictures, too, which try one's nerves by and by. Set, sweet smiles on young faces get to be unendurable. Any suspended action always does, worrying us into positive dislikes of the object which seems never able to complete an act it has already begun, and sometimes elicited our sym-

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pathies for. All of this proves that our pictures are movable properties, and that although we may arrange them to our liking to-day, to-morrow we may be quite willing or obliged to do our work over.

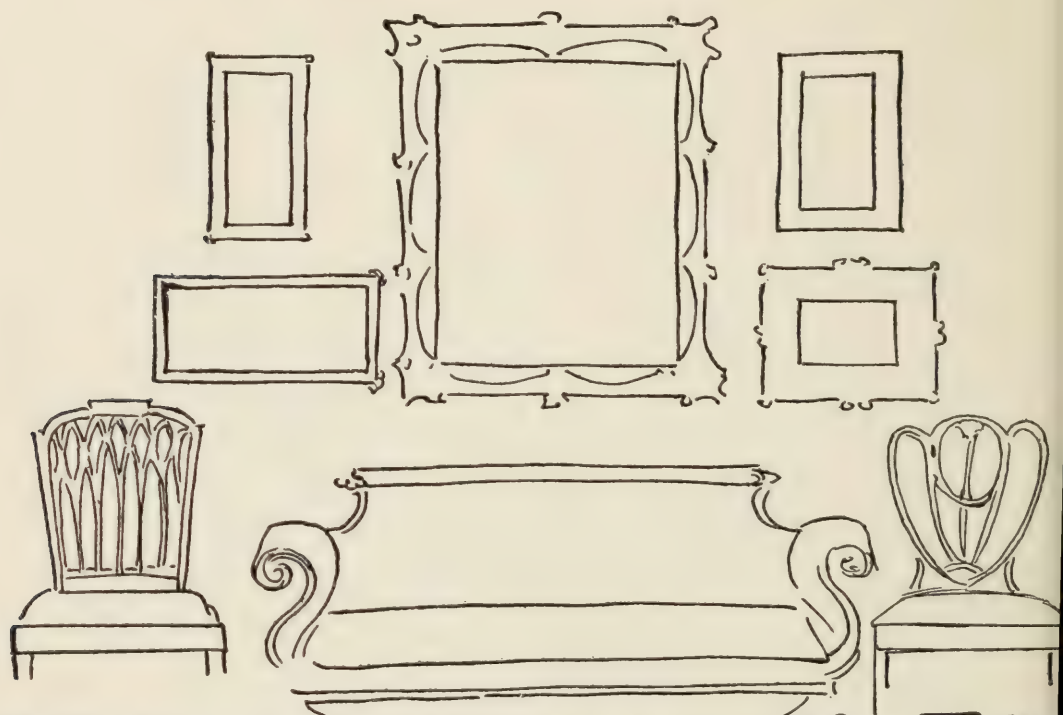
No great picture affects our nerves in this same way, for in great pictures there is always an element of repose ; but then, few of us possess great pictures. Those of us who do, give them established places which are never changed ; for such a picture belongs to the very structure of a home and is interwoven with its sentiments.

Now and then one runs across a man who has whims about his pictures. He will possess several that a museum might covet, and these he will conceal, bringing out but one at a time in order to enjoy it for a little — a month or two, perhaps. Then he puts it away and brings out another, to enjoy that also for a space. His theory about picture-hanging is a simple one — only that picture which is worth living with, and that one by itself.

With the rest of us the temptation is to cover our walls, to fill up empty spaces, forgetting that empty spaces are often a relief. The majority of us live shut in by houses for which the architect has done nothing, and which the paper-hanger has not improved. Of all these walls none is so hard to arrange with pictures as that of the long, narrow parlor with its fireplace a dozen feet from the window on one side and the folding-doors on the other. Almost any picture hung here, unless it has suffi-

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cient size and importance to be made a centre, would become a spot. Moreover, if there is nothing beneath the picture, no piece of furniture with size enough to make it worth considering as a foundation, there is no way of making the picture part of a composition, properly supported from below. We all



Sketch showing pictures hung in pyramidal form. Furniture forming a base

know how awkward the effect is of a huge, solitary, heavily framed picture on a light wall with nothing above or below it. It never seems to have any place there.

One of the cleverest of my acquaintances insists that pictures should be hung according to certain

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laws of construction — a strong base below, a large centrepiece above, and a higher point above this. “Then,” to quote from this particular authority, “you get the triangle, or you get the arch and you do not violate the architectural laws.”

The strong base may be a sofa against the wall, or a bookcase, or a large table. The centrepiece must be an important picture. It may be square or oblong. Again, it may be built about with two uprights on the side, but the base must be wider than the structure above and there must be a highest point of apex.

Pictures may be arranged in panels, side by side, each panel matching the other in size.

There are some people, on the other hand, who insist that the putting of one picture in the centre and then building about it must be conventional and tiresome. Their plan is to arrange pictures with some irregularity (see diagram). No one picture, it will be observed, is on a line with the other.

In a room, not a picture-gallery, the best of one's pictures go over the fireplace. It is the place of honor accorded to that which one values most. When such a picture was owned before the room was built, the architect generally makes it part of his plan and encloses it as in a frame with the wood or the stone of the fireplace.

The wire or support of the picture should never show, although the question of injuring the wall has to be considered at times, and the wire or support left in evidence.

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The proper framing of a picture is a question with which every artist of note concerns himself. It is certainly not a subject which the amateur should neglect. Pictures should be taken to a dealer, mats

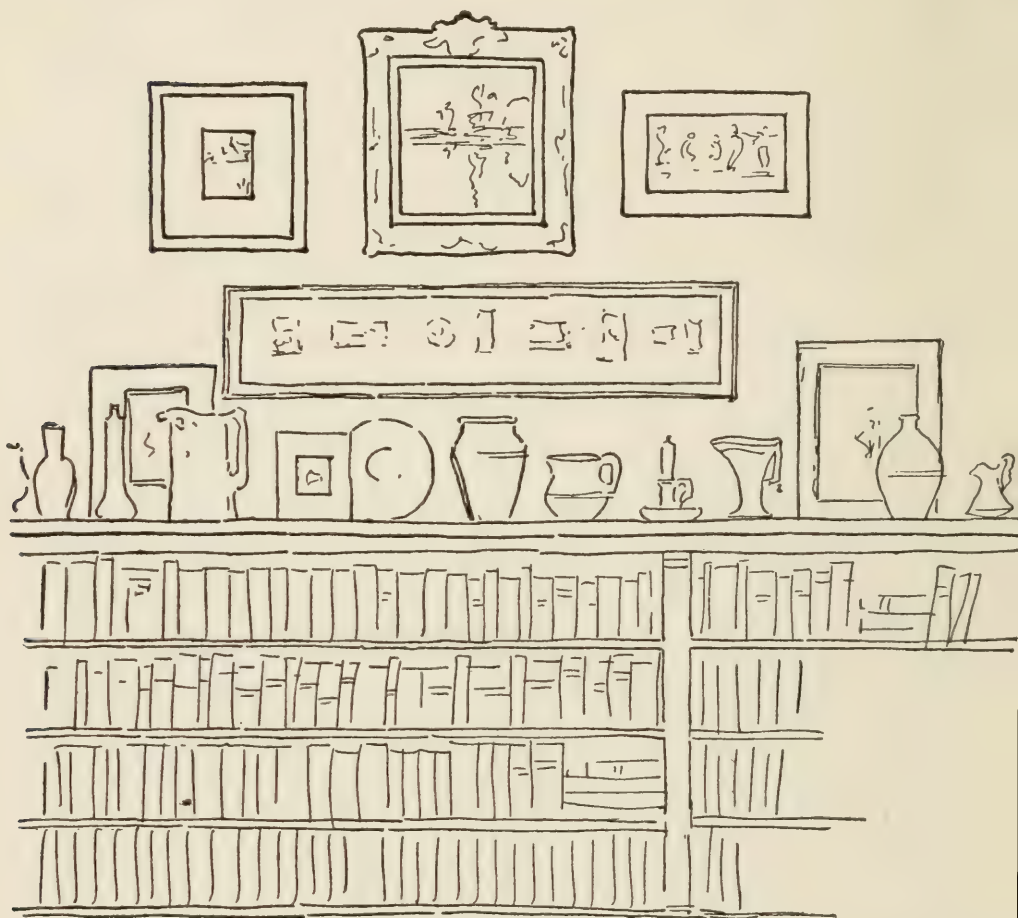


Diagram showing the arrangement of pictures over a low bookcase

and frames tried on with the same care — indeed, with even more care — than one expends in the choosing of a bonnet. Primarily the nature and character of the picture must be considered. A mat of one color

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may destroy some subtle tone of the painter, another may serve its legitimate purpose and frame it. Only by experiment can the point be proved. After the mat comes the frame, the size, its quality, its color. Every frame-maker has an assortment to submit to every customer. Besides this he is constantly experimenting in stains, so that dozens of different woods of various tones and textures are to be found in the shop and he is willing to go to work to produce others. A good frame-maker will take infinite pains to tone his frames and his mats with his pictures and consume days in hunting through various other establishments to get just the right quality for a mat. The question, therefore, of fashions in framing ought not to arise, unless some interesting departure has been made by an artist of note, and the rest of us, recognizing his principle, adopts it.

I do not know who it was who proved to us first how much better certain photographs of the masters looked without mats, and framed simply with the wood and toned with the dark of the picture, but whoever it was he has made himself many followers, so that almost every picture of the kind has a wide wooden frame and no mat.

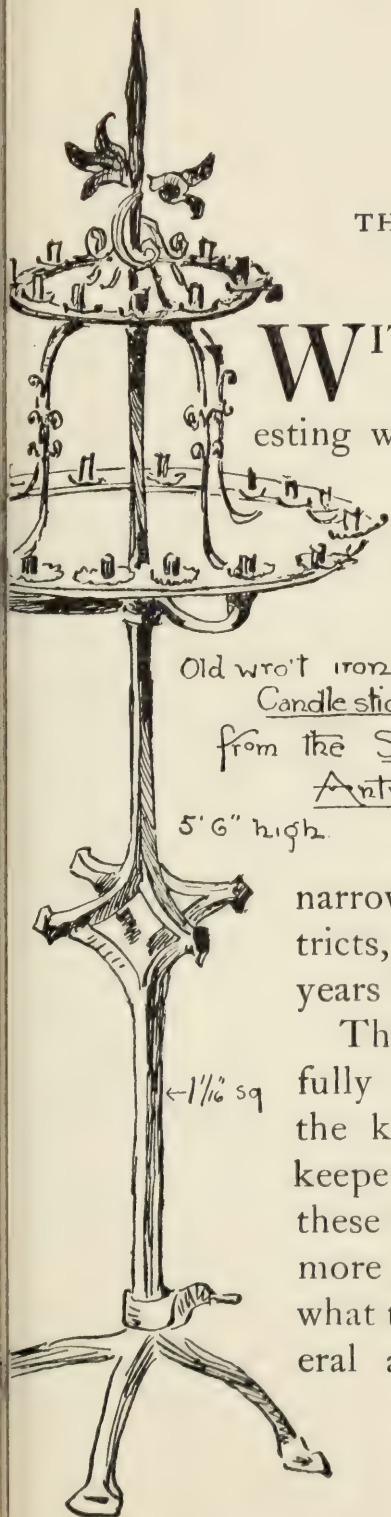
White mats should never be used on dark walls, and indeed no picture should be framed without some thought of the wall on which it is to be hung. White frames and mats on dark walls give to a room a look of being plastered with postage-stamps. Every frame and mat is felt, but the pictures themselves are forgotten.

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No picture by its setting wants to be made to stand out and claim recognition for itself. Its excellence may compel you, but its framework should not; especially is this true in the rooms of the dwelling-house, where pictures are like companions, — never so charming as when they lack insistence.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE DECORATIVE POSSIBILITIES IN
PLASTER CASTS



Old wrought iron
Candlestick
from the Steen
Antwerp.
5' 6" high.

← 1 1/16 sq

WITH discretion and a little money almost any house may be made interesting with plaster casts. This discretion, it goes without saying, must be displayed in the choice which the buyer makes. The streets of large cities are full of image-venders; large and important stores on principal avenues are now devoted to reproductions in plaster, so that one Antwerp is no longer obliged to search, except for purposes of economy, in narrow side streets or tenement-house districts, as one was obliged to do not so many years since.

These large stores, of course, have carefully selected examples, and one pays for the knowledge and judgment of the shopkeeper. But if one has money enough, these stores are always to be recommended, more particularly when one does not know what to buy. The grotesque and the ephemeral are avoided in them, and when the

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grotesque is indulged in, as when the gargoyles of Notre Dame are shown, it is because a special genius has stamped it, or because some historical association has made it famous.

The image-venders, on the other hand, carry everything in their heavily laden baskets, displaying on the steps of some empty house worthless casts of diving women together with the head of the Venus de Milo or the marvellous "Winged Victory," pipe-rests, and busts of French dancers. They have among all their trash some good examples, and they come from out of the way shops in which any number of other good models may be found. Every example, for instance, shown in the illustrations has been purchased from a street vender with the exception of the beautiful Andromeda, by Bauer, on which there is a copyright, so that it is only sold in certain places, and the lovely Tanagra figurine reproduced for museums.

The image-vender carries all of these in his baskets, none of them more than seventy-five cents, in many cases only fifty or twenty-five, and, if desired, he will tone the casts with yellow without extra charge. One must remember that the pure white cast, while agreeable in certain places, is often too strongly accentuated in others, so that toning becomes a necessity.

One wants, of course, to avoid making a "spot" of a plaster cast. For instance, one small cast on a dark wall with nothing about it in the way of pictures or books is apt to prove the only visible thing

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in a room. On the other hand, when a cast is large and important, it may be treated with the dignity that one observes in hanging pictures, as that famous group of "Singing Boys," by Luca della Robbia, in bas-relief, from the Duomo at Florence. This deserves a place to itself over a mantelpiece, or a panel at one side of the room may be given to it. So, too, many of the Madonnas, always in bas-relief, may be treated.

The "Saint Cecilia" is well known, and is to be found in almost every group of plaster casts. It is in bas-relief. It has been toned to a yellow, although it is even more lovely in pure white. This, too, deserves a panel to itself, and should be treated with dignity. It is shown in one illustration beside a church banner, and with hanging lamps from churches about it. It should always be placed where it can be looked at, and never hung to fill in.

Many names have been given to "The Diver," by Thorwaldsen: like the "Narcissus," he costs but fifty cents from a vender. In stores he sometimes costs many dollars. He is the very embodiment of strength, vigilance, and manly courage, and becomes a companion in almost any room.

All of the large stores and most of the better-known image-venders publish catalogues of casts, with their names and prices. These catalogues are sometimes of great service, although I have never chanced to find in any of them the name of a little bas-relief I have known for years. It is a very

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beautiful Madonna, with exquisite face, and her hands folded across her breast, looking down at the infant Jesus and St. John. The young Italian image-vender who gave it to me one Christmas years ago told me that it came from the altar of an Italian church, where it was considered so precious that the doors of a small shrine were always kept closed before it. He added that a priest had allowed a young sculptor to take a cast of it at night, the man stealing in through a window to do so. At any rate, some ten or eleven years ago not many had been seen in this country. And yet it now costs but twenty-five cents, its staining not being counted extra. It is too small to be treated by itself unless a special panel is prepared for it.

Barye, the famous French sculptor, who died in 1875, made the four groups of animals shown outside the Louvre in Paris. These belong to the history of art, and almost every image-vender has one of his casts, some good models having been put on the market. His "Tiger Devouring a Crocodile," and a beautiful lioness are also sold. None of these is expensive, — the lion costing but fifty cents. The cost of it in bronze is enormous, and well out of the reach of most of us. But the fifty and seventy-five cent casts of it give us the form and the movement and wonderful detail. I do not know where the mould was secured, nor whether it is made from one used for the bronzes, but everything in all these casts depends on the mould. The image-vender endeavors to get the

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best, and goes to Europe to find new ones. Occasionally he is permitted to take a cast of some original statue, just as the young Italian sculptor did in the church at night. Or he is fortunate enough to get a mould from some cast in a museum. Then his fortune is made. Very few of the small casts of the Venus of Milo, however, are made from beautiful models, and I have never seen a small one that did not disappoint me. I never buy one. The casts of the "Winged Victory" are better, especially when made from a large model, but then they cost some six or eight dollars, and must be given a place by themselves.

"The Narcissus," on the other hand, is beautiful wherever placed, although the smaller models show a bad forefinger. The original is in the Museum at Naples among the group of masterpieces. Its beauty all the world has recognized.

Casts should never be draped with silk. Silk may be hung as a background; and when this is done a great value is often lent. But the fashion of draping bits of modern silk about a cast is always bad. The two do not belong together, and when so placed merely indicate that one is striving for an effect without knowledge of how it should be attained. At the same time a bas-relief may be hung above a mantel over a piece of silk falling straight.

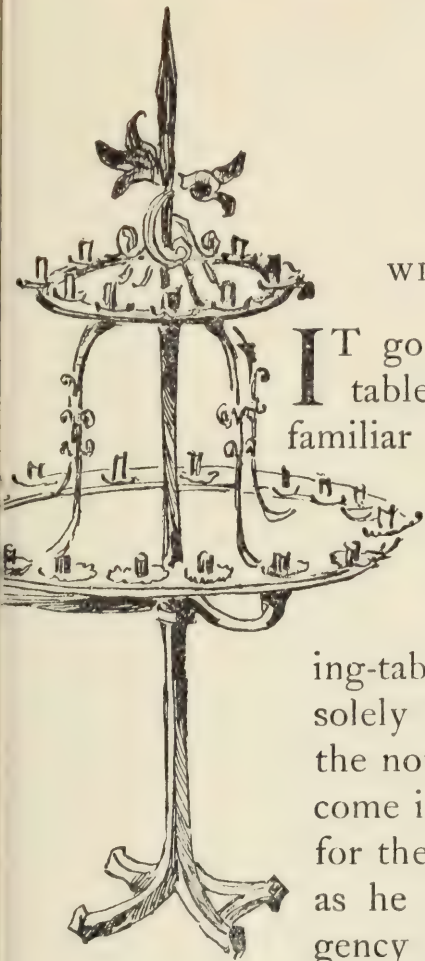
Any number of other models might be named. But enough has been said to prove how easily a plaster cast lends itself to decorative purposes, and

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to the pleasure of the householder as well. That it involves no serious outlay has been shown. Fifty cents is about the average price, a good cast being always possible for that sum. An interesting use of a large bas-relief has been referred to as forming the headpiece of a carved four-poster hung with fine apple-green velveteen. They are especially interesting over doors and over mantelpieces.

CHAPTER XXVII

WRITING-TABLES AND PIANOS



IT goes without saying — that no writing-table in a drawing-room ought to betray a familiar touch. It is not the place for private correspondence, for bills, memoranda, or for any personal possessions proper to a desk or a writing-table in one's private apartment. The writing-table in the drawing-room is purely and solely for the convenience of the visitor, for the notes he may want to write when he has come in to leave a message in your absence, for the address you may want to take down as he gives it to you, and only in an emergency for the note that you yourself may wish to write.

It should always have its portfolio of more or less elaborate design. The one in the illustration shows a back of cut silver on a leather ground. The blotting-paper should be spotless. Either in the portfolio or in a separate box, of silver, brass, or leather, there should be note-paper, envelopes, and a pad. Stamps should always be provided, for while the good taste of the visitor ought to control his use of them, the forethought of the hostess

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should never put him to the embarrassment of having to look for one.

The inkstand and pens should be looked after daily with the same care that is expended on the saltcellars. The inkstand may be of silver, brass, or even of crystal. The one seen in the illustration happens to be a gem of its kind, inlaid with turquoise and fine enamel, but every-day mortals may content themselves with simpler devices. The flowers conceal the electric lamp, but no writing-table should be without a light for writing at night. It should always have flowers, and when possible some interesting object which relieves the table of an office-like character. A bronze base stands on this one. Paper-cutters and letter-openers should never be forgotten. As many persons prefer sealing-wax to mucilage for their letters, it is generally customary to provide a small candle, matches, and sealing-wax. A small silver spoon, especially designed for the purpose, is now sold for the sealing-wax. The spoon is held over the flame of the candle, and when the wax is melted it is poured over the envelope, in this way avoiding all danger of a fire or a burn. Some of these spoons are elaborate in design and interesting objects in themselves.

The writing-tables of living-rooms and libraries are often of great size, when a room itself is large enough to contain them. Thus, there will be one of oak with dimensions so ample that two well-sized chairs can be drawn up by it, and two

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complete sets of writing materials be placed upon it, without interfering with each other. When such a table is of light oak, brass instead of silver is effective for inkstand, paper cutters, and candlesticks.

When a writing-table is pushed up in a corner, between a window and a blank wall, the light coming in at the left, the whole corner can be most delightfully treated by building up over the table on the blank wall-space. Thus, rows of book-shelves may be made to run up, surmounted by a bust; or a picture of exceptional beauty may be placed there, an altar lamp suspended from the ceiling above.

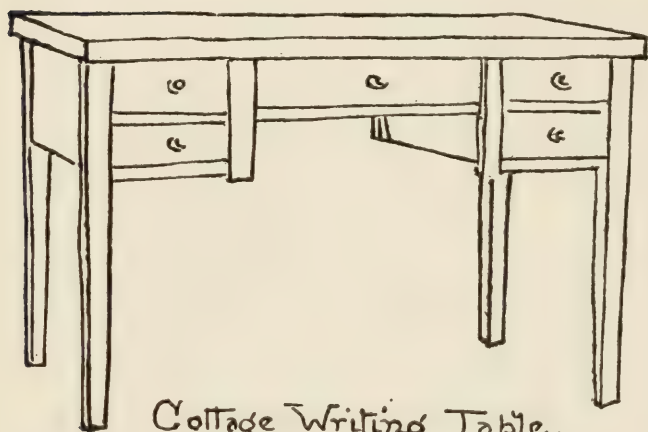
Any one unable to purchase a good writing-table can treat an ordinary pine table with oil, directions for which are given under a separate chapter. In many small country houses and studios, such a table will serve every purpose. It can still have a good cover, cut to match its top, and it can be set out with its proper appointments and its flowers. When the legs of such a table are square, they can be covered with a brocade or a cretonne, nailed on with brass-headed tacks, the same material being used as a cover.

Very many writing-tables have no covers. One sees this in beautiful libraries, where the table is of genuine old oak, waxed, never varnished. Sometimes a blotter with silver corners is placed; sometimes the portfolio is so large that when spread open the blotting-paper inside acts as a softening surface on which to write. A very good table cover

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is, however, made of dark invisible green velveteen, exactly fitting the top of the table, and trimmed about the edge with a gilt gimp sewed flat. This velveteen sets off silver or crystal.

The cover seen in the illustration is an old piece of embroidery out of some palace, and is in keeping



Cottage Writing Table.

with all the other appointments about it, — the carved table, the bronze, the silver vase of exquisite workmanship, the rare old inkstand, and the hanging on the door. Pieces of brocade are used in the same way. In

fact, one may be as extravagant as one chooses without offending the proprieties, providing only that one breaks no law of good taste by displaying the tawdry. With simple leather or brass one may do without silver and still make the writing-table interesting. One should neglect none of its requirements.

No upright piano should cut across a corner, with its keys toward the room. I make special insistence upon this point, recalling as I do the numbers of diagrams sent me from all over the country, in almost every instance showing me a piano cutting the corner of a room. Few things are more awkward. The empty corner can never be filled, and a

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constant view of the keyboard is not beautiful. The customary way now followed is to place a piano at right angles to a wall, its keys in this way concealed. In conventional high-stoop houses with front and back parlors, the piano stands in front of one of the windows, its keys to the right. The back of the piano is then draped with a piece of rich brocade. Against this, at one end, is a table set out with photographs and silver frames, a lamp and flowers, the piano making a background for the table. This table is not for decoration only, but for the convenience of persons occupying the sofa, pushed flat against the wall, and coming, therefore, at right angles to the piano. The top of the table is generally covered with a piece of rich brocade, which, however, does not fall over its sides.

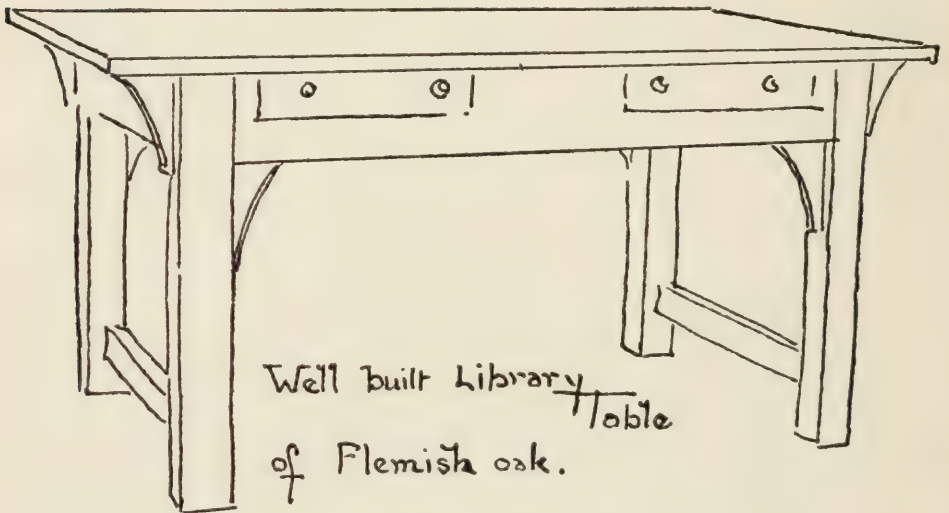
Sometimes the piano is put into a corner and lighted with candelabra. A small sofa is then drawn up in front. Such an arrangement brings it at right angles to the open fire ; while the musician at the keys is concealed, the general effect is greatly enhanced.

When it is necessary to have the keys exposed, much interest is added to the general composition by a pair of tall cathedral candlesticks set on the floor on either side of the seat.

The piano no longer is allowed to overpower the room in which it stands. The long-established rule about its position of importance in a room, its being kept without anything on its top, the turning of its keys so as to make them the most conspicuous

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features in an apartment — all these old ways of doing have departed. It is all well enough for a public performer to sit so that an audience may have an uninterrupted view of his fingers, for an audience wants to know how a musician plays ; but in everyday houses and lives, music is for the entertainment of a family circle, and but small contributions to that entertainment are made by a view of a timid or embarrassed player. Besides, there is always a little



touch of mystery and sentiment lent to a player concealed behind the keys. For that reason the fashion has grown of concealing the keys of an upright piano. Very often, instead of a piano-stool a carved bench out of some foreign church is used, so that many young women when playing might well remind one by their air of Saint Cecilia.

Cheap silks on the backs of upright pianos are

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always to be avoided. China silks and printed stuffs looped and tied in impossible knots are very objectionable. The handsome scarf shown in the illustration is an old altar-cloth of white satin, embroidered in gold and silver as only those old nuns understood the art. But it would be better to have no hanging than to substitute a piece of cheap material for this, which is purely ornamental in its character. When some piece of stuff serves a purpose of utility, the case is altered. It may be as plain as necessity requires. For that reason one may put a piece of China silk or figured material on the back of an upright piano, if one has nothing better to use in its place, because the back of an upright piano must be concealed to be made endurable, the wires and works showing, as they do not in the case of a grand piano.

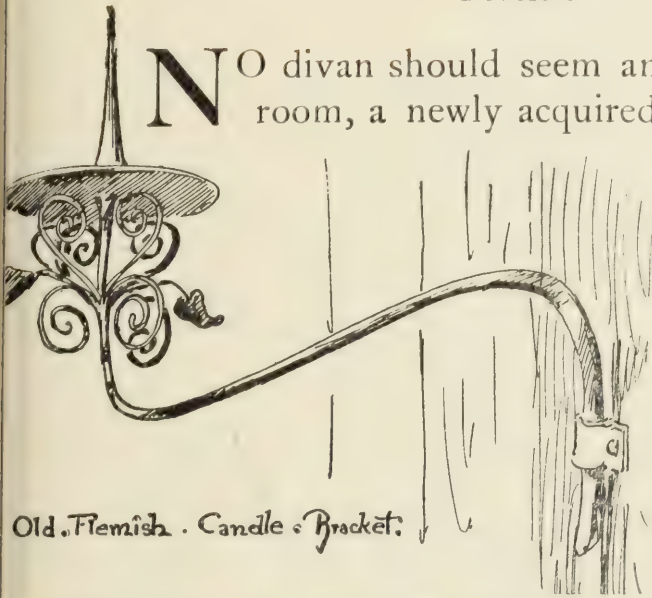
When the keys of a grand piano are toward a wall and the end projects into the room, it is customary to throw over this end any beautiful piece of embroidery which one possesses. Sometimes the finest of old brocades are used in this way, — never anything of wool, or coarse enough in texture to scratch. A fern or a vase of American Beauties will hold the embroidery in place. A small sofa is often placed at the end of a piano, especially when the end reaches the mantelpiece, so that two persons may sit with their tea-cups by the fire while a “tuneful melody” is being played just back of them. This is a favorite way of arranging old-fashioned drawing-rooms in New York, where the

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fireplace is in the centre of the wall directly opposite the door, the dining-room opening by folding-doors in the back. The space between the folding-doors and the mantelpiece is generally utilized in this way for the grand or square piano.

CHAPTER XXVIII

DIVANS



Old Flemish Candle Bracket.

NO divan should seem an excrescence in a room, a newly acquired purchase, a suggestion borrowed from a neighbor, a general catch-all for pillows of every hue and description representing the work of amateur needles, Christmas gifts from

friends, and purchases made on bargain counters.

Although a divan with its cushions should be made part of a distinct composition, this composition should not be so strongly emphasized that it proclaims itself over and above every other feature in a room. The ordinary divan unhappily does this.

Into a room with matting on the floor, a divan hung with Turkish stuffs will be introduced; thick hangings appropriate for out-of-door places will be looped over spears, or fish-nets will be used, sus-

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pended tent-fashion over the divan. Such an arrangement may be well enough in studios, when a room is large enough to subordinate them, and when the very nature of the environment makes possible a variety of effects. They are at times delightful in camps, but they are quite out of the question in ordinary houses, and altogether objectionable in small every-day rooms and apartments.

The most perfect example of a divan and its surroundings that I know is that which is found in the studio of an American artist living in Paris. (See illustration.)

Every detail has been carefully studied. Nearly all the materials are genuine, and belong to some one distinct period of Moorish art, — the hangings, the plaques, the pots. It will be noticed that no attempt has been made at drapery, and that therefore there is no possibility for any hanging being made a receptacle for dust. The drapery at the top does not fall far out over the divan, and was placed there to break the uninteresting wall above. The geometrical designs shown are embroidered in silk on gauze of a soft old yellow. The thin, light bars are linen embroidered in silk. The divan, which is long and wide, is covered with old-rose on a gold ground. The pillows are covered with embroideries to match. The artist devoted many years to the collection of these materials.

The color for a divan must be studied from the point where it touches the floor, over the mattress, to the ceiling. The color should not only blend



“EVERY DETAIL HAS BEEN CAREFULLY STUDIED”



Divan Mattress at the back under the shelf.

with that of the floor-covering, but with that of the wall-space or the background, from which it blends with the colors above. A divan uphol-

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stered in green may, for instance, be out of the question in a room hung with green, even when the rest of the furniture is covered with the same material. This difficulty would arise in a room in which a divan was placed directly in front of a dark bookcase filled with colored bindings, the floor being covered with a Cashmere rug in which blues appeared among the yellows and the reds. The green of the other pieces of furniture would have been separated from the rug by an empty space, and by the polished mahogany of the framework. The green of the curtains would have been separated by the dark stain of the floor bordering the rug. The divan, however, having no wooden framework and running to the floor, would, with its cover, come against that of the rug, and should be considered in relation to it.

Such a divan, then, should be covered with a figured stuff, that the break between the floor and the background would not be felt. To use a plain green would be to introduce a streak. The figured stuff should repeat some of the colors of the rug. Its cushions again should take up these colors, yet make one tone predominate, — a yellow, for instance; if there were much yellow in the room, perhaps a figured yellow, like that of shadow silk.

A bookcase makes an excellent background for a divan, with pictures above. This brings a book just within reach of the hand. The shelves, when they are wide enough, become convenient resting-places for pipes and letters.



“THE UPHOLSTERER CAN MAKE A BACKGROUND TO MATCH THE DIVAN”

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The upholsterer can make a background to match the divan (see illustration), which in reality transforms the divan into an article of furniture possessing a certain formality, suggesting less of a lounging place than one for sitting upright, which is as well in some rooms.

When this soft background is not possible, one must be made with a row of cushions, these cushions to be of hair, or of patent felt, since they are only intended for the support of the softer down cushions in front of them. The color and texture of these harder cushions is often that of the divan itself; the soft silk cushions give the other color notes.

Above the line formed by the tops of the hard cushions, a mirror, the length of the divan, is introduced, making an excellent composition, especially when the divan fills an angle with a window at one end and a door at the other.

Sometimes a small shelf runs above the cushions, set out with books and candles or a lamp, over which is hung a large picture or bas-relief.

Every color or combination of colors introduced in the cushions of a divan should be studied in relation to each other and to the room itself. The idea of the heterogeneous, the tossed and the tumbled together, the flying off at a tangent after new fashions and fads, without regard to the environment in which they are to be placed, the look of being copied out of fashion journals and introduced carelessly, — all these things should be avoided.

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An opportunity for introducing delightful effects in color and design is presented by the divan, and it is only when this is accomplished that this piece of furniture is made to lose the tumbled, careless air which makes it so objectionable in many parlors.

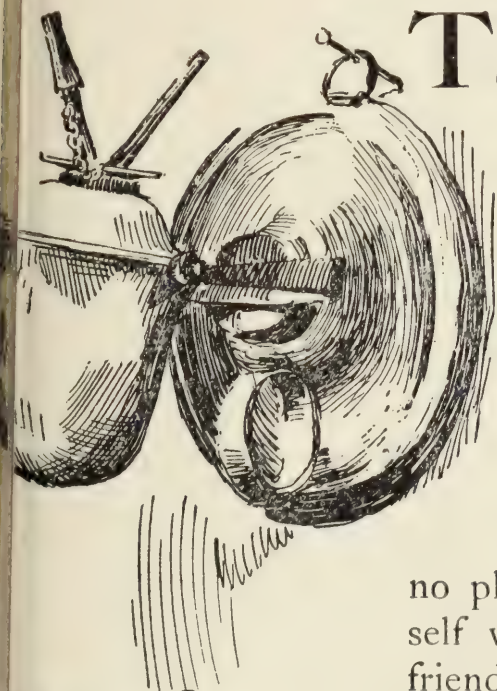
In living-rooms of cabins and mountain houses, cots covered with stuffs and filled with cushions make excellent divans, except for one defect. If the mattress be thin it sinks, and the framework of the cot cuts the leg of the person who sits there. This trouble is obviated if a box spring is used.

The custom of having divans made with a box underneath for holding dresses is an excellent one for those living in cramped quarters.

The average height of a well-constructed divan is sixteen inches. When it is thirty or more inches wide it makes a good sleeping place, but must then be treated with taste if any one is to sit on it and not lounge. A divan twenty-seven inches wide is more easily treated.

CHAPTER XXIX

MOUNTAIN CAMPS AND HOLIDAY RETREATS



Old Ship's Lamp.
from a Whaler.

THE fact that one is able to do as one pleases, to build after no law, to furnish after no particular fashion, makes a camp or holiday house delightful. The whim of the individual rules. If one person finds comfort in a tent, he is at liberty to sleep under canvas; if another likes best rough bark and no plaster, he can indulge himself without comment from his friends.

It has been my good fortune at several times in my life to spend months in some of these camps or clubs or holiday retreats. No one name applies to them all. I have never yet seen any two cabins or tents exactly alike, although by common consent the same materials are everywhere employed. Rough bark is used, and if stone or shingles do

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appear every effort is made to take away the "cottage" look ; the look of houses put up in rows along a village street ; or of imitation Swiss chalets, with their scroll-sawed, varnished trimmings. The roofs are stained with a green wash to bring them into harmony with the woods and rocks ; their outside walls are never defaced by paint.

There are always two points in the building of a cabin about which the interest is concentrated, — the living-room and the veranda or loggia.

The central point of interest in the living-room is the ample fireplace built of rough stone and plaster, projecting into the room. Round the great chimney the other rooms of the house are built, furnishing fireplaces for several chambers. When the expense of an extra chimney is not to be had and a room needs warming, the habit is to run up a small stone or brick chimney from a corner of the room, running into it the stovepipe of a Franklin, or in cases of emergency that of a stove, although no one should ever use an air-tight stove without an apology : air-tight stoves are an abomination.

The staircase, where there is an upper floor, begins in the living-room. Now and then it is enclosed, but ordinarily it runs up to a small balcony skirting the chimney, which gives access to the several bedrooms above. The fashion is picturesque, since the railing of the balcony is hung with rugs or gay Indian stuffs, and decorated with green branches. Sometimes the chimney is built so as to leave a space behind it, in which coats and hats and lanterns can be

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hung, for lanterns are as necessary in these mountain settlements where there are no street-lamps as tea-cups to a tea-table.

The living-room may be finished with rough bark, or with pine and plaster ; sometimes logs with rough bark are used as posts at intervals around the room, forming panels to be filled with whatever the taste of the mistress dictates, — a picture, a plaster cast, a piece of Japanese matting, or a bit of simple drapery, chosen for its wood tones and colors. These objects, however, when used, are subordinated to the general scheme of decoration, which relies for its effects upon growing things, — the greens of ferns and branches, and the colors of wild flowers picked near by. Fresh greens are cut every few days and arranged about the room. The tables employed are seldom from shops or factories. When they are, bark of some kind is employed to give them a look of belonging to their environment. This does not mean that furniture is made of twigs and pieces of knotted wood bent into fantastic shapes, and then varnished to add ugliness and misery to everything in its neighborhood. Simplicity should rule here, and in its preservation the good taste and the tact of the householder are displayed.

Living-rooms are often dining-rooms as well, one corner of the room including the table and cupboard. Blue and white, or red and white, china or flowered dishes are used. Nothing should be used that represents mere cost, nothing that cannot be replaced when broken — the hangings are always of

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the simplest flowered muslins, stamped cottons, Indian blankets. The bedrooms have bare floors and cheap ingrain rugs, or mattings. The furniture is of wood. In every house there is a tin closet or two for the storing of mattresses and blankets during the winter, and for putting things out of reach of the squirrels or field mice.

The veranda and the loggia are placed always so that a view may be obtained, — down a valley, across a stretch of water, or into the leafy heart of some great tree. They are built of rough bark, the trunks of trees forming the railing and balustrade. Hammocks are sometimes hung in the loggias. Divans are often used there. The real lover of the woods has a framework made on which fresh balsam boughs are laid, softened with cushions for the head. Ferns and nasturtium vines fill the boxes on the rails. The boxes themselves are covered with rough bark. Branches of trees covered with fresh leaves are fastened to the upright posts of the veranda, adding a note of decoration, and assuring a certain privacy.

The verandas below stairs are furnished with straw chairs, their cushions covered with cotton stuffs. Tea is generally served here. The tea-service is simple. There may be a brass kettle, but silver is not in good taste, and the tea cloth is white trimmed with lace, or is fringed and embroidered. Costly laces and linens are out of the question.

In the laying out of these camps certain laws of construction are followed, laws which should be true

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to the spirit of camping. Separate structures are provided for each individual. Sometimes there are as many as twenty-seven or more cabins belonging to a single camp ; each guest, each child has its own. The dining-room is detached, and so is the living-room. Board walks and little paths connect these several structures, hidden from each other by the trees. When such a camp is laid out near the water, rigid rules of etiquette prevail. Thus, no visitor is supposed to approach a camp except by water, and to the landing-place provided by the owner, a guide being always in attendance at the float to receive the guests of the family. To approach a camp through the woods is to take a family unawares : it is like driving up to its back door when one comes to pay a formal visit, -- a breach of decorum not readily forgiven.

Each tent or cabin has its own open fire. When a tent is planned the chimney is built first. Round this chimney a wooden structure is erected, often of charming design, and intended as a dressing and writing room. A bed is often placed in it, although there is always a bed in the tent that adjoins it. During the winter, everything belonging to each tent is taken down and stored in its own wooden structure. There is a veranda for each tent, formed by a continuation of the platform, and protected by a rough wooden railing. This veranda is furnished with chairs, hammocks, and plants. An extra canvas of some color, red and white, blue and white, or green and white, is then made to cover both

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the inner tent and the veranda as well. Mosquito nets are sometimes hung inside the tent door.

The greatest ingenuity is displayed in the arrangement of each camp, and the greatest charm prevails. Indeed, the life that goes on in these camps, more especially in those built in the Adirondack woods, can, in its fascination, be compared to nothing else except perhaps life on a yacht.

When single walls are used in the construction of a cabin, time is allowed to stain them gray. Nature is encouraged to do most of the work of decoration. No paint is admitted indoors. One cabin bedroom will have its stone chimney and open fire. The walls and ceilings will be of pine. White enamelled furniture will be introduced, the bed dressed with simple flowered muslin with ruffles, repeated in the curtains at the windows and on the couches and tables. The effect of such an arrangement is cool, cheerful, comfortable, and charming, for no appointment is neglected; the desk, the lounge, the night-table and the lamps, the bookshelves, the dressing-room, and the bath are all there, though one is shut in by evergreens with banks of ferns close to the windows, and though the squirrels come scampering in through the open doors and climb into one's lap for nuts.

I remember one dining-room with the veranda projecting over the water. It had a wainscoting of rough bark, which covered the studding and beams also. The ceiling between the beams was of pine. A yellow straw matting filled the panels

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and the walls. All the china in the room was blue and white. So were the muslin curtains, and so, too, was the Japanese rug. The chairs were of pine, painted white. A huge white crane hung from the highest beam of the ceiling, directly over the middle of the table. Twenty people could dine there in comfort, and there was usually that number in this most hospitable and most delightful of dining-rooms.

Living-rooms one hundred feet long are sometimes found in these camps. Until one is in such a room, with its great stone chimneys and windows and doors on every side, one does n't realize what the charm of a holiday existence may be. Windows face in every direction, and each one is made into a retreat full of angles and recesses, where one can sit hidden away from the rest of the room.

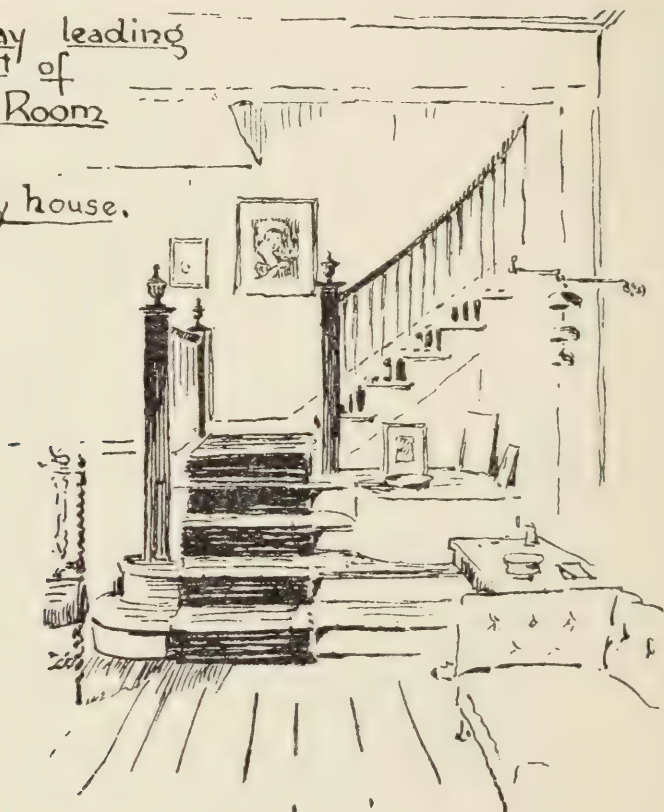
No attempt is made to clear away the woods outside. The trees stand about like guardian spirits, while inside there are the fires, books, music, and games. One of these living-rooms has no color in it but the golden and russet tones of autumn. These are in the hangings and the yellow of the pine shingles, between the beams, or in the mattings and the bits of tapestry between the panels, the cushions on the seats, and in the new branches that are daily introduced. Another room will be furnished in Indian blankets with stuffed birds, and pieces of pottery, and books, books, books everywhere, within reach of any hand.

All of these camps have "lean-tos."

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A "lean-to" is a square structure, not unlike a sheepcote, without windows or doors, but with sloping roof and three walls. In rough camps they are built of green boughs, and are meant only to serve as shelter for a night or two. But in those luxurious camps which are left standing from year

Stairway leading
out of
Living Room
in a
Country house.



to year they are built for permanent use. Their walls are like those of a log cabin, and the sloping roof is made rain-proof. An inclined floor is laid to protect the loungers inside from the damp earth, the floor level with the ground at the entrance sloping up toward the wall at the back, where it

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stands some two feet higher and well away from possible damp. On this wooden floor balsam boughs are laid. Cushions are arranged along its head, and an afghan or blanket is left for some cool afternoon or evening. Directly opposite the opening of this lean-to, which may look into the wood or down the lake, wherever the view is fine and privacy best insured, a camp-fire is laid on a high stone hearth—almost an altar. The comfort and charm of these lean-tos cannot easily be measured. Out-door life is possible in them even when rains fall and winds blow. They are large enough to hold five or six people, and not too large for one. They furnish inducements which ought to prevail with the rest of the world for getting out of our houses oftener, for the enjoyment of simple pleasures, the telling of stories before a fire, or the reading of books on a quiet afternoon. It would be possible in almost any wood-lot or under any orchard to build such a place with only a few planks, while the brush gathered from different directions may serve as a camp-fire. One wonders why so charming an arrangement must be confined to camp life when opportunities for it are to be found in almost every country place, and would add immensely to its pleasures.

No well-appointed camp is without its camp-fire, which is lighted every night with as much regularity as parlor lamps in town. Round the fire there are wooden benches, bath-chairs, seats of various kinds. Some kindly Providence protects the surrounding

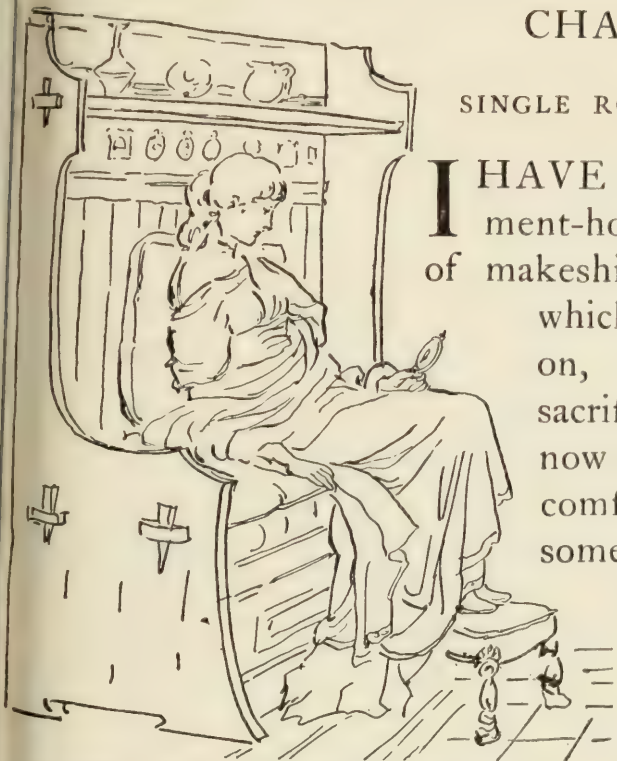
HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

trees and the canvas near by, although these fires are lighted season after season until traditions of a score of years have grown about every inch of the ground. In many instances a cement foundation is laid for the fire, sometimes one of rough stone only, and sometimes the fireplace is built like an altar. The charm of these fires is the charm of every lovely, pleasant, and beautiful thing.

In no camps are the lanterns forgotten. In some there are several hundreds of different colors, strung on trees and verandas, to light the different paths. No attempt at a particular arrangement is made. The lanterns are hung where they can be of most service, and yet the effect at night from a lake near by, as one looks toward the different camps hidden under the trees, is of a bower of lights arranged in graceful lines, creating an impression of beauty that is always individual.

CHAPTER XXX

SINGLE ROOMS AND STUDIOS



Oak Settee. row of miniatures hanging under shelf. The seat is unusually high on account of the view from an opposite window.

I HAVE often referred to apartment-house life as a series of makeshifts and compromises which must go endlessly on, now demanding the sacrifice of a sentiment, now the immolation of a comfort on the altar of some propriety. But the makeshifts and compromises of apartment life are as nothing compared to those which the single room or the studio force upon the individual.

Studios, in the very nature of things, are susceptible of a treatment that yields generous returns in effect and charm. They are larger than the rooms found in ordinary dwelling-places, more can be done with them; moreover the artist is generally a master of color, understanding harmonies and combinations, possessing, besides, an accumulation of

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materials chosen for their beauty, possessions which in themselves are decorative and interesting. My sympathies do not go out to the dwellers in them; my enthusiasms do. All my pity is for the single woman, or the man and wife of narrow means who must live in a furnished room. The world is full of these unfortunates. One stumbles over them in unexpected ways. The bed and the bureau are always in evidence, the washstand too. Every effort made to improve the situation but adds misery to the general result, as when wedding silver-pieces and lamps are displayed on a table by themselves, but a few feet away from the bed or the bureau, as a kind of hopeless proclamation of past splendors, — a silent protest against a present condition.

If such a room is to be made a permanent dwelling-place, — and by permanent I mean a tenure lasting through a season, — no one should yield too readily to a situation which might be bettered with a little thought and a very little money. When I was a child I knew a woman with a restless, nervous husband, always at an hour's notice dragging her from place to place, to this hotel and that, this ugly rented cottage by the sea, and then two weeks later to another just as bad — and not at all because he was poor, but because he was queer. I learned more from her in my girlhood than from any other woman I knew. She taught me what it was to yield gracefully to a situation, and yet to maintain one's principles and tact. She was like the stem of a water-plant, I used to think, swayed by every

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counter-current, yet never losing a hold on the earth below.

Her plan was always to keep certain possessions easily carried from place to place. She had, I remember, a set of pretty table covers, trimmed with heavy lace and embroidery, one or two of damask, some photographs, a few candlesticks, three or four sofa cushions, and some vases for flowers. I have seen her arrive at her destination at six in the evening, and by seven have her room take on the air of having been lived in for months. She would do this even when she knew she must leave again in twenty-four hours. Out would come the table covers, the cushions, and the pictures; her maid was always sent out to buy flowers. The candles were lighted. If she felt annoyed or worried by her husband's whims, he never knew it, nor did her friends. Nothing in her surroundings betrayed it, nor did she ever yield to the slightest discouragement. I used to think her a saint. I think now that she was something more, since the saints that I have read about always ignored their obligations to the world, whereas I believe that a real saint should respect them — never neglecting that tribute which we have been enjoined to render unto Cæsar.

Every other woman, it seems to me, might do as much if she tried. Candlesticks cost little. There are those of glass which are good in design and which can be had almost anywhere for less than one dollar a pair. Linen table covers are always being made and embroidered by women, and sofa cushions

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are a drug in the market. These cushions need not all be covered with a stuff. A heavy linen embroidered or inlaid with lace is excellent. The cheap wools, and the cheap, highly colored, elaborately designed silks, must always be avoided.

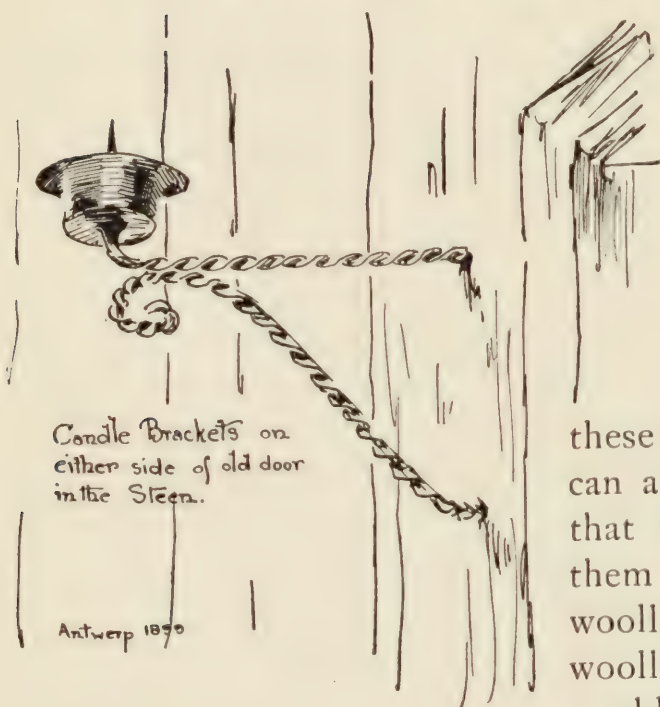
For a few dollars more, dotted-muslin curtains can be made, or those of a cheap flowered material.

Such a pair of curtains will transform the dingiest room and lift it off the plane of rented by the month to any transient applicant. I can, in my mind's eye, see many a gloomy room transformed with

these simple touches, and so can any one who remembers that the horror of most of them comes from musty woollen hangings, fringed woollen table covers over marble-topped tables,—

woollen covers that have done service through a long line of ever-changing tenants. Of course a screen should be purchased to hide the washstand, but these can be bought for a dollar and a half.

A man will not put up with as many makeshifts as a woman. Besides all this, he goes out to pay his visits. A woman receives all hers at home. He therefore does not object to a display of his brushes

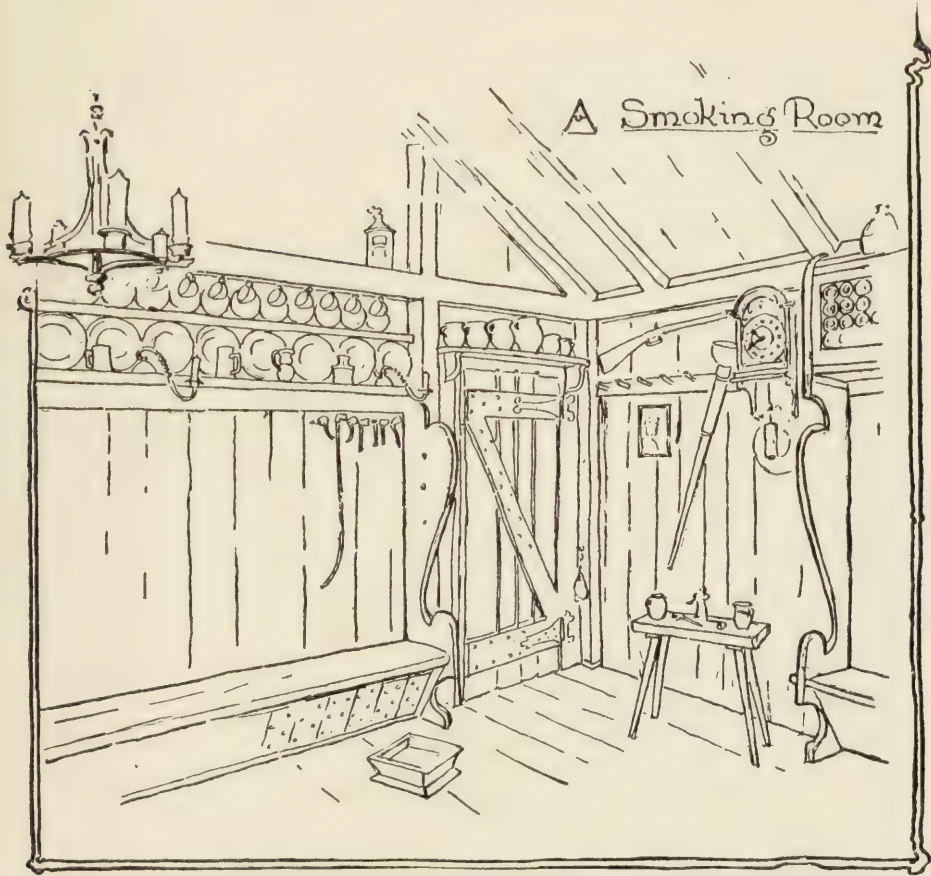


Candle Brackets on
either side of old door
in the Steen.

Antwerp 1890

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and his combs, and his shaving utensils. I sometimes think he rather glories in a parade of his shoes. The rows and rows of them that he sets out on his shelves! The exposed-to-the-dust-closets that he has built to receive them! A woman is



more fastidious, and if she be a young girl forced to live in one room and to receive her visitors there, she shrinks, or she should, from displaying the appointments of her toilet, however elaborate in detail.

Upon such a young woman I should strongly

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urge the purchase of a desk rather than that of a bureau — an old-fashioned desk, with four drawers below, and a series of small drawers and pigeon-holes above, enclosed by a slanting cover of wood which folds back and down. In this desk she can keep all her toilet articles, her silver-backed brushes if she has them, because in a room in which she receives visitors nothing of this character should be shown. The drawers may be filled with her linen. It should go without saying that the desk should always be kept closed and fastened. Her writing-table could be arranged elsewhere, or she could have a writing-board, to use on her lap. This board could be covered with cretonne, and filled with her paper and writing utensils fastened down by strips of silk elastic, with brass-headed nails.

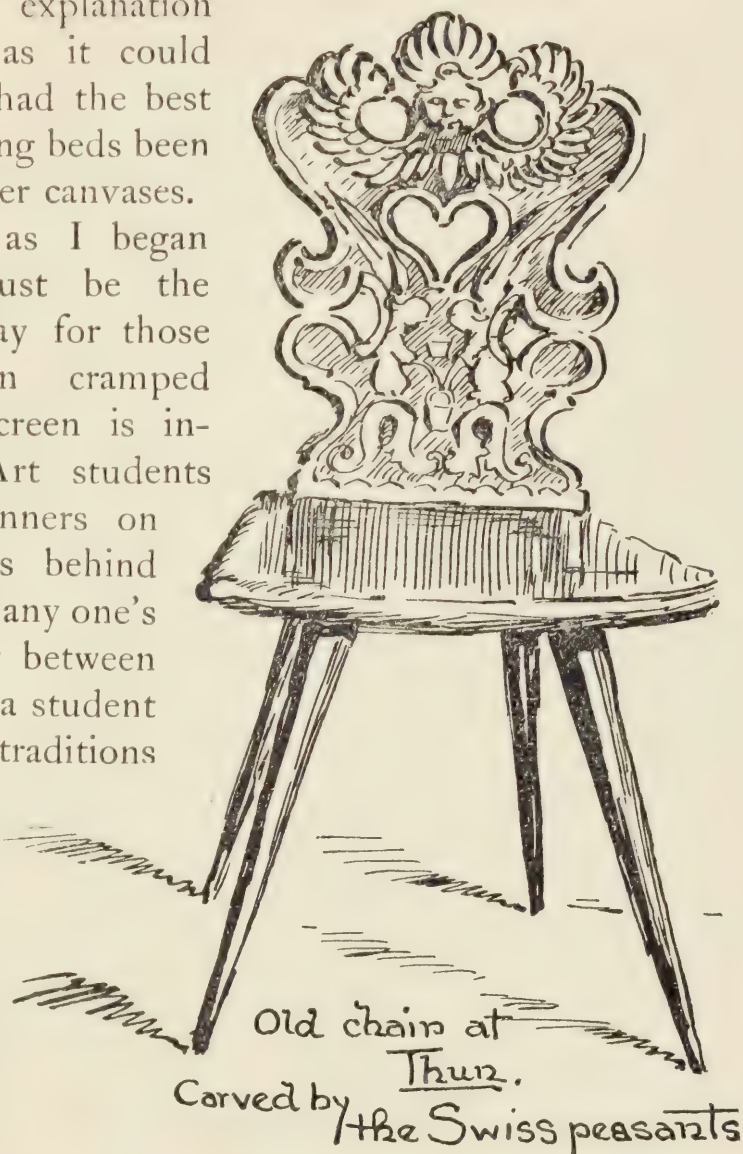
The question of a bed will always bother her. I should advise a divan and cushions, to be made up every night. A box under the divan will hold her skirts. Some folding beds never betray themselves, some can never be forgotten. I know a young art student who hung one with Japanese paper lanterns and Japanese pictures, and decked it out like a holiday ship, did everything, indeed, to make it look unapproachable and out of the question, a convenient hanging-place for all her odd possessions. Then she slept on a cot in the corner, arranged as a divan, and went to endless trouble to make it every night. She could not bring herself to submit to a folding bed. Another art student of my acquaintance slept on a divan, but none of

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her visitors suspected it. When some one at one of her studio teas looked about and asked her where she slept, she prevaricated and said down the hall, and her explanation was accepted, as it could not have been had the best designs of folding beds been set up among her canvases.

Makeshifts, as I began by saying, must be the order of the day for those who dwell in cramped quarters. A screen is indispensable. Art students cook whole dinners on tiny gas stoves behind screens without any one's being the wiser between times. If such a student be a lady with traditions to draw upon, she can do all this and still make her surroundings interesting and stamp them with refinement. One

such woman treated her studio in this way: A genuine old mahogany sideboard was set with silver. A



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divan with silk cushions was pushed against the wall, with a mahogany desk at its head. The mantel-shelf was filled with pieces of brass. A mahogany table stood in the centre of the room, several quaint chairs drawn up beside it. Her bureau, with its array of silver, was in a large closet, the door tight shut. A tall screen hid the sink with running water, and the pine table that held the gas stove on which she cooked all her meals. No one ever suspected what was behind that screen, — studio properties, visitors supposed. It was undeniably the home of a lady of taste and cultivation. Had she had less taste, she would not have put her bureau in that closet.

Another studio was arranged in this way by two women living together: As the ceiling was unusually high, a wide platform was arranged across one end of it, the end of it into which the entrance door opened. Access was had to this platform by a narrow staircase. The platform was protected by a balustrade hung with embroidered silks. Here she contrived a dainty bedroom. The other end of the long studio was partitioned off for another sleeping-room. The space under the platform and by the entrance door was utilized as a dining-room. One of these artists was a wood-carver. She designed a rich wainscoting for this dining-room, over which were shelves with carved brackets set out with china, pewter, and silver. The walls were covered with rough burlaps, treated liberally with gold paint. From the four corners of the platform above, small

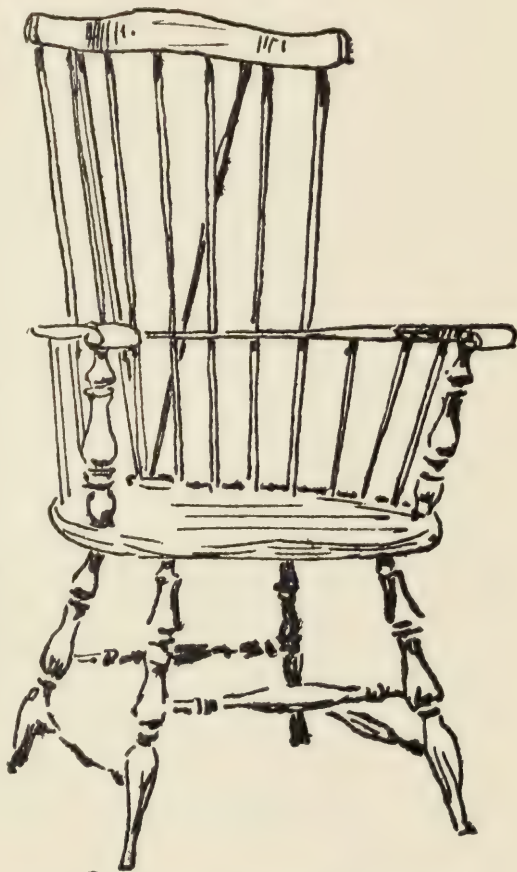
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brass altar-lamps were suspended. The tables and chairs were genuine black oak carved. The studio proper leading from this ante-chamber was furnished with divans, brasses, carved chairs, tapestries, pictures, and plants, — an enchanting room, as charming as its clever maker.

For a well-studied economy of space, I know few places to be compared to another studio belonging to a young woman whose taste in decoration is exceptionally good. The walls are hung with a russet-green denim, — denim green on one side and of reddish tone on the other. The wood-work is painted to match, the green paint being toned with much raw sienna. The floor, treated with wax, is rubbed every day until it has taken on a polish and a sunny, cinnamon tone that is delightful.

From the entrance door a view could originally be had of every corner of the room.

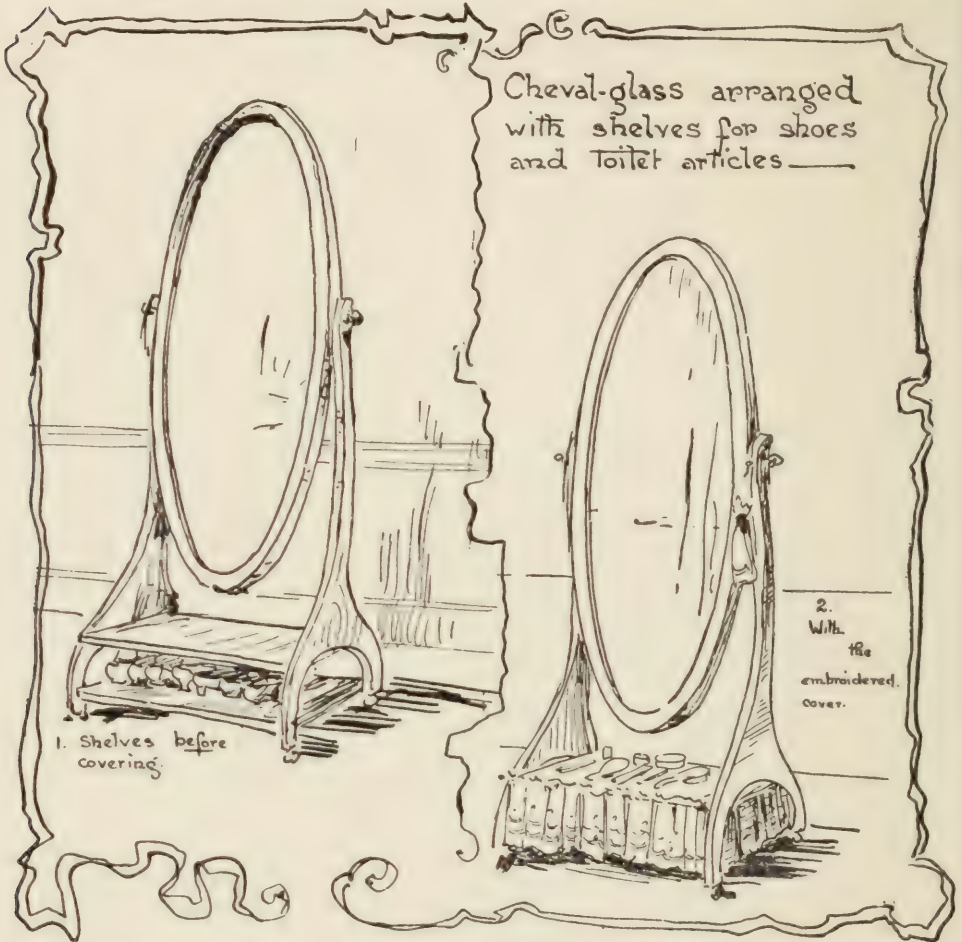
To remedy this, curtains are hung across to form a vestibule, the vestibule itself having a shallow closet at one side for dresses. In one corner of the room a corner closet was built, under which the bicycle is



Oak chair made in Boston.
Copy of the one used by
Gov. Bradford —

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kept. The shelves are filled with artistic pottery. In the corner diagonally opposite, two divans are placed near the window. The steam heater, under a high side window, had a frame-work built over it, on which a seat is placed. Opposite the bicycle



cupboard is an upright piano, behind which are shelves for dishes and a drop-shelf. Here great ingenuity is displayed in the shelves fitted in between the piers which jut out into the room. One set of shelves is devoted to china, the other to pans

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and kettles. The drop-shelf is made of a small bread board fastened to a shelf of the right height by hinges. Each cup has its proper hook, each plate its place. A denim curtain covers the shelves. As it exactly matches the wall color it never betrays itself, or what it conceals.

Across the "alcove," a framework is built, covered on the back with denim to match the walls. This is supplied with spring doors which swing in and can be fastened together, so that they form a sort of letter "A" round which easy access in and out is had. Inside of this enclosure the bed stands under the window, the latter being filled with a lattice made out of the inner wooden framework of an old Japanese screen from which the paper has been stripped. This part of the room, with its bed and wash-closet, is entirely shut off by the temporary partition from the living and working part, and becomes in reality a tiny separate chamber.

The pier glass, which is moved about the inner room, is also turned to double account, its lower part being fitted with shelves for holding shoes and toilet articles.

In the centre of the studio, a large oak table stands just under the huge skylight. Across the base of the skylight, high overhead, is another shelf for pottery. The room is delightful.

CHAPTER XXXI

MAKING OVER FURNITURE



A Japanese Wall Lamp:
made of paper in a
bamboo frame.

IT may be of interest to some amateur with ample leisure and not a little talent to be exercised, to know what has been done in the way of transforming old appointments by several young women with a weakness for experiments. It must be urged, however, that unless the condition of the old furniture makes

its renovation worth while it were best left alone. Pottering for its own sake is never to be recommended. One, too, should be possessed of a certain skill before going to work upon furniture; for furniture, being made of good material, unlike a batch of cake spoiled in the making, cannot be thrown away. The results are at times certain forms of mental dyspepsia for those forced to live with spoiled chairs and tables.

In one instance, where the furniture was painted blue, then stencilled in yellow, care was taken to tone the blue with yellow and a little red. The result was a bright blue, though not a pure one. The yellow for the pattern was rather dull, varied

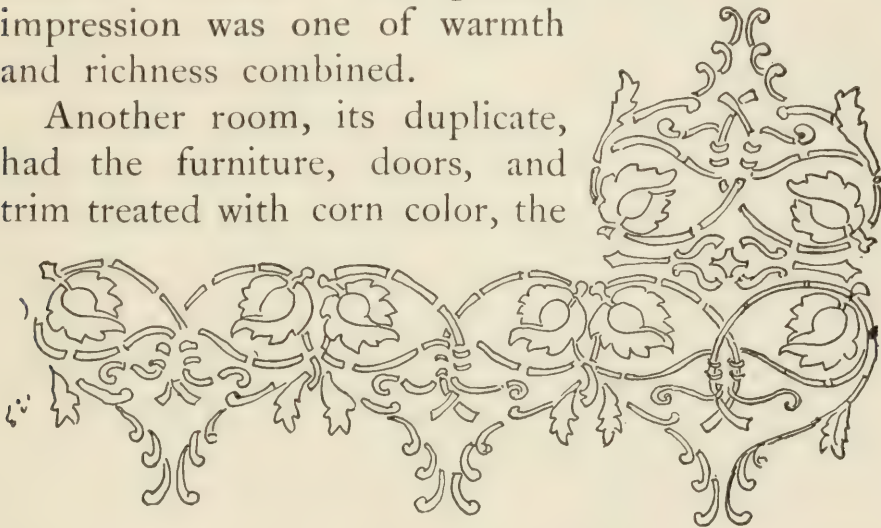
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occasionally in stencilling with green and brown. This can easily be done in stippling.

When the furniture was finished, the room itself was begun. The doors and trim were painted blue and stencilled with the same yellow; the rafters were stained with warm sienna brown, the walls being painted a dark ivory white. The entire room resolved itself into one of blue and warm-yellow tones running into the ivories. The general impression was one of warmth and richness combined.

Another room, its duplicate, had the furniture, doors, and trim treated with corn color, the

Stencil pattern
for one color.

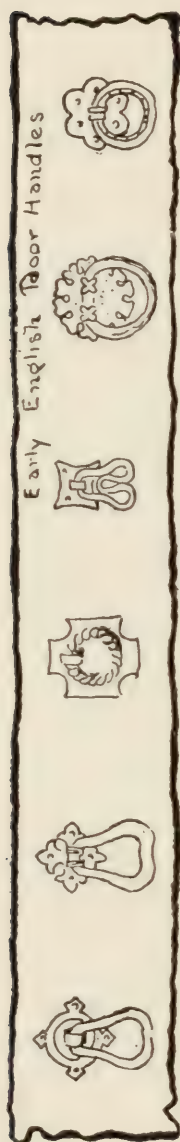


stencilling picked out with warm reds, browns, and greens. The walls were dull ivory. The pattern was outlined in light brown, care being taken to make the difference between the colors in the stencil pattern and the color of the wood-work very slight, so that the whole scheme harmonized.

The same furniture might have been treated with dull green, with design stencilled in soft browns and yellows, avoiding the formality of too even a tone.

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It will be noticed that the head and foot pieces of the bed and the side pieces of the bureau were treated in the same way.



The green in this instance could be made by mixing chrome green, raw sienna, red, a little blue, and perhaps a touch of black. The color of the stencilled pattern should be that of oak-leaves in the late autumn, — a soft, rich yellow with dull reds against the soft green. It is made by mixing into the green yellow ochre and Venetian red, varying the colors with green and burnt sienna. The color of the stencil must tone with that of the background, care being taken not to make the pattern too staring. Effect will be added by making the upper part a light brown, so varying it that toward the bottom it becomes quite green.

The walls of a room in which such furniture is placed may be treated with a warmer yellow than that which predominates in the stencil figures, or perhaps a clear bright, sunny yellow. A frieze might be added with a ground work of a lighter yellow, stencilled with part of the pattern used as the design on the furniture. The hangings could then be of soft pinky red with Nile green stripes.

Stencil patterns are made of heavy manila paper

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(that known as "detail" paper is the best). If the pattern selected is of the correct size, it may be transferred with impression paper directly on the brown paper. If not large enough, it should be enlarged to scale. After the design is drawn, the spots which in the finished work will be of one color are neatly cut out with a sharp knife, the paper being laid on a sheet of glass. The knife must be constantly sharpened on an oil-stone, as paper dulls the keen edge. Two or more stencils will be needed for each pattern. Care must be taken to leave sufficient material between the openings cut out to prevent the paper tearing while the work is being executed.



Cut two tiny holes in the same place in each stencil to serve as keys in fitting your pattern to the wall. It is better to start with a small, simple design, as a large one is clumsy to manage. After the cutting is finished the paper must have two coats of strong shellac varnish to render it tough and water-proof. A separate stencil and brush is used for each color. The bristles should be tied half-way down to prevent the brush spreading. Distemper colors (calcimine) are often used in stencilling plaster surfaces. These may be purchased mixed with the proper amount of glue ready for use. Colors in powder should be at hand to vary the shades, if necessary. Amateurs will find these easy to manage. The painting should not be

Door Handle from
Haddon Hall.

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

too accurate, but must not be "sloppy." Nothing must look machine made.

Old wooden arm-chairs have a new interest lent them by leather seats that take the place of worn-out cane. These may be tied on the chair by leather thongs. A piece of heavy leather, the size of the chair bottom, is to be purchased from any shoemaker for very little, and for an additional few cents it can be punched with a series of holes with brass eyelets put in about the edges. The leather thongs are then used as lacings, being passed over the framework of the seat. A leather cushion can be added, the four corners finished with leather tassels.

An ugly oak wardrobe has been renovated by being painted to match the room and stencilled, its objectionable handles being replaced by something simpler. Another wardrobe was stained green, the grain of the wood remaining visible and adding a quality to the work when done. The hideous ash furniture now sold everywhere can be stained over the varnish in this same way. Staining this ash is, by the way, better than painting, as it does not conceal the grain of the wood. Let one coat dry thoroughly before applying the next. It dries quickly. After the application, if too shiny, a dull finish can be given by rubbing carefully with finely ground pumice in water. This is a laborious process, but well repays the trouble.

"Forest green" and "walnut stain" can be purchased at any paint-shop in small cans. Twenty

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cents' worth will be sufficient for two or three large pieces of furniture. The main thing to observe is, to apply the paint in thin, even coats, allowing no drops to run down at the corners. Thin with turpentine to make the shade lighter. This mixture is capital for unpainted wood, window-boxes, and so forth. On wood which has not been previously varnished it has no annoying gloss. If paint is used in place of stain the last coat must be "flatted" with turpentine to take off the lustre.

Army women, obliged to move from place to place and to sacrifice their best possessions, would find the painting of ordinary furniture of inestimable value to them. Common kitchen chairs painted white, and common pine tables painted in the same way, would be infinitely better in many instances than cheap oak sets, which only lower the character of any room in which they find themselves. By buying inexpensive pine furniture, and painting it, one's capital could be invested in rugs and hangings of good quality, and fine table linen and covers. Freshness and charm would at once be added to interiors: qualities which could never be obtained by imitation cherry tables with twisted legs, or oak chairs that have been carried about the country until they are as shabby as stage properties after a season's successful run.

Early English metalwork
Closing ring

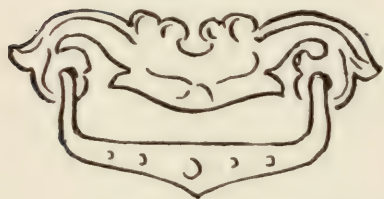


Chant Marie Form
Callistocke Dorsetshire.

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

When simple painting is done, no attempt at stencilling need be made, the white painted chairs and tables easily passing muster. An ingenious woman might treat her freshly painted white furniture with a border of Dresden sprays, tiny pink roses, and green leaves. The common pine furniture could be treated with oil and rubbed down, with less labor and more durable results. For studios and summer camps, where the ingenuity of the householder must be exercised and where

Brass handle.



there is little money to expend, the oil is to be preferred. In time wood thus treated becomes of an agreeable dark color.

With white paint, a pretty chintz or cretonne, a few mirrors, plants, and good photographs, the simplest house may be made charming.

The white paint, when chintz or any flowered material is used in decoration, plays the part of framework, and tends to throw into stronger relief the textile thus employed. A colored paint would not so easily accomplish the same results, and if used, would have to be carefully considered, its tone selected with great care, and its relation to the chintz and to the lines of the room never for a moment overlooked. The entire room would then assume an altogether different character, to be studied in relation to its general color, as, for instance, were a green paint used, one that took up the color of the leaves on the chintz. The ceiling would then

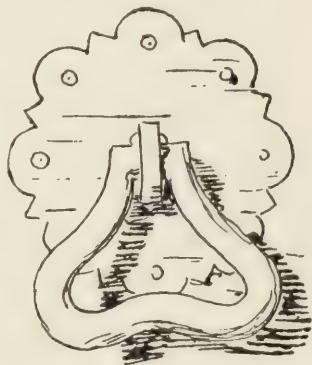
HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

become even more of a problem, unless one were content to give the room the look of a box, and one would have to study to avoid the effects of spots and patches where the chintz was carelessly introduced.

There is another reason why white paint helps solve the problem of a successful room in which chintz or cretonne is used in decoration. The skill of the individual painter must be relied upon for a tone, and unless the painter happens to be a genius, his attempts are usually failures. Manufactured articles, on the other hand, — papers, chintzes, and good textiles, — are made from carefully considered designs, and from carefully formulated color-schemes submitted by experts. The householder, making a selection, knows what she is buying, but she never knows what she may be called upon to pay for when the average workman is employed on color.

With white paint, then, the chintz or textile employed has a distinct decorative value. It is accented and defined. It becomes a trimming, a very dainty and beautiful trimming, and when well employed is made to seem part of the original structure or design of the room. All decoration of whatever kind should produce this impression. When it does not it is out of key.

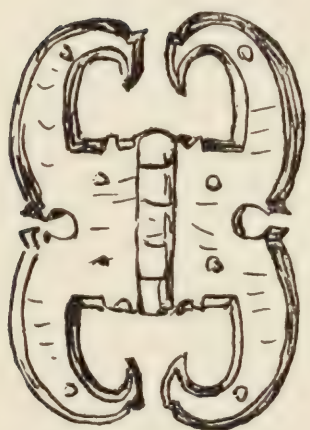
A careful study of the illustrations which accom-



Simple old closing
ring from the
"Commandery" at
Worcester.

HOMES AND THEIR DECORATION

pany this paper will well repay the lover of pretty interiors, not only those interested in seeing what can be done with white paint, mirrors, and chintz, but those wanting to understand the secret of a pretty room. Take, for instance, the corner in which the divan is placed, and notice, first, how successfully the flowered chintz has been used. Thus not only the divan itself, with some of its cushions, has been covered with the chintz, but the curtains at the head of the divan are of the same material. The mirror back of the divan, and the second mir-



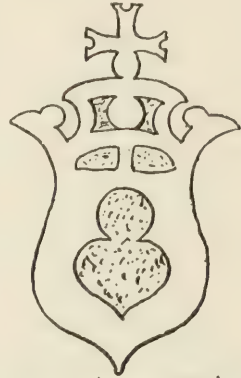
Wrought iron tringe
Two hundred years
old. English

ror next the window, have also been framed with the same material. To prove that this use of the chintz is meant to be part of the general plan of the room, notice how a band of it, as wide as that covering the mirrors, also outlines the window-frames, and again, how it appears on the wall, just below the frieze.

By examining the ceiling in a second illustration, that one which gives the bed, it will be seen that this border of chintz is again introduced in the ceiling itself, at a given distance from the angle, making the two chintz borders — namely, that one on the wall and that on the ceiling — equidistant from the angle. A large panel of the chintz is also used on the ceiling, carrying out, therefore, the general plan, and repeating the panel back of the bed.

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The general arrangement of the corner in which the divan is placed illustrates some of the most important principles in house-furnishing. The whole corner, it will be seen, is a composition in itself, even while it belongs to the rest of the room. The cover of the divan has been considered in relation to its background,—the curtains at one end, and the cushions and mirror at the side. The introduction of the mirror not only repeats the lines of the window-frame, but breaks up what might otherwise be an awkward wall-space. A bookcase, or a piece of drapery on the wall, successful as this treatment is in many cases, would not have been happy here, since the object of this summer room was to give an impression of lightness and airiness, of cool and restful spaces. All this has been accomplished without sacrificing anywhere a question of comfort. The excellence of this corner lies in the fact that comfort has been the first consideration of the householder, as it should be everywhere. In this case, however, comfort includes not only repose for the body, but refreshment for the eye. Thus the light falls in just the right way, tables and books are arranged with reference to their use, plants are introduced to break up lines and add the beauty of their forms. These points would not, perhaps, need to be so strongly emphasized in a paper of this kind, except that they are the very points which are oftenest neglected by

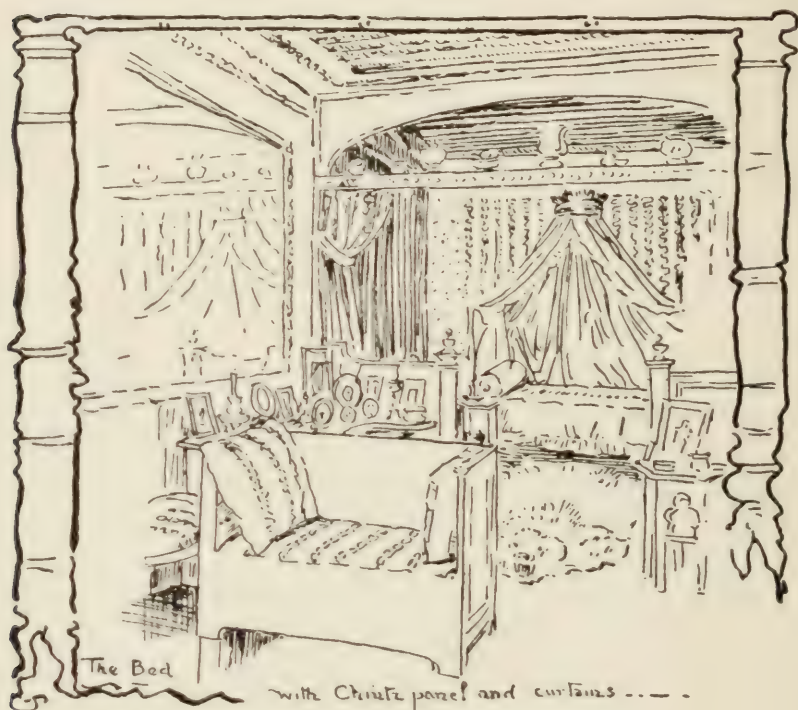


Escutcheon. 6' High
from the door
of the Bishop's Palace
Wells.

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those who wish to give a corner in a room a special character, and who introduce divans, not only all out of key with the rest of the room, and where they become in consequence not only mere excrescences, but where they are quite useless for reading and lounging.

The arrangement of the bed deserves particular

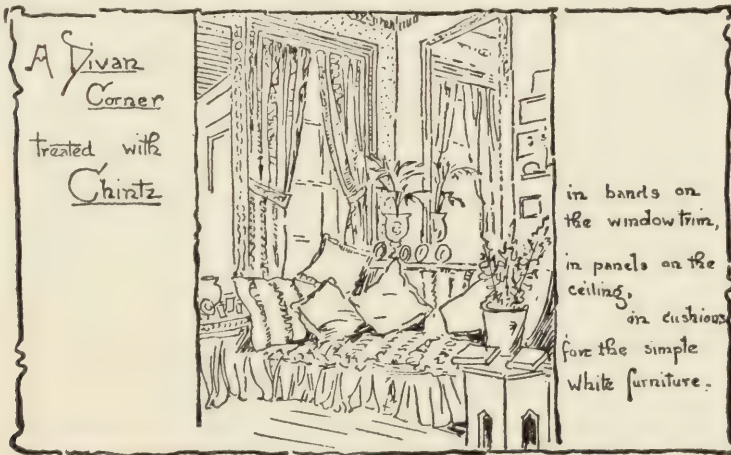


attention. The panel of chintz on the wall makes a good background for the bed curtains. These curtains are of the same material, and lined with a plain color. They are then gathered together in the centre, and held in place over the centre of the bed by a carved ornament, the curtains falling not only back of the bed, but over both the head and foot

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boards. The alcove in which the bed is placed is again shut away without suggesting being shut in, the horizontal beam from which the curtains are suspended coming just below an open space. This gives the possibility of plenty of fresh air, an essential point in a bedroom. To relieve what might otherwise be an awkward gap, various pieces of pottery and porcelain are introduced in symmetrical arrangement. The chintz, it will be noticed, again appears in a band matching that of the mirrors and window-frame, and running along the horizontal beam. This small band appears also on the toilet-table, just above the curtain.

One should also notice that a look of being upholstered is everywhere avoided in the room. One sees this in the small sofa in the bedroom, and again in the seat under the mirror, which, though cushioned in chintz, is not curtained, in this way preserving the sense of airiness and freshness before referred to, without sacrificing comfort.



CHAPTER XXXII

NOTES AND SUGGESTIONS



Old hanging lamp.
for burning oil
with a floating wick
brass - 6' high

SOME effective results may be obtained in the decoration of country houses for special festivities by the use of tennis nets, nailed, for instance, along the casings of stairways, their meshes filled with bunches of flowers and of greens, — hemlock, cedar, and holly in winter, varied with splashes of brilliant color ; of autumn leaves and chrysanthemums in the fall, and of apple-blossoms in the spring. Pink and white apple-blossoms, by the way, make the most exquisite of house decorations, though the harvest must be sacrificed to it.

We are often bothered with the doors in our houses because few of them are interesting in themselves. Many of them open awkwardly, taking up too much room in small places. When this is the case, the door may not only be split in two and swung from either side, so that it opens exactly through the middle, but it can be split through the centre and so arranged with hinges that one part of the door doubles back against itself.

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The Spaniards have a pretty fashion of decorating the panels of their doors with brass pieces, — the heads and wings of cherubs or the head of an animal. In this country the fashion is copied now and then, and plaster casts are used when brass pieces are not possible. The decoration of a panel always adds interest to the door. In the houses of some artists every panel has a painting, the work of some distinguished painter and friend.

Any utilization of space invariably appeals to me. Something akin to genius seems often to have been exercised and a rare imagination brought to play. I never get over the wonder of seeing how interiors of the same dimensions, how yachts especially, will be cut up and arranged, in one instance giving you a sense of amplitude and comfort and in another a sensation of always being cramped for space. In many houses there will be uncomfortable conditions accepted as hopeless year after year until some woman of imagination comes along, and, presto ! a change that makes every one marvel that no one thought of it before. Such a change was made in the house of a woman I know, a clever woman who makes no more demur about ripping a summer-house to pieces in order to bring about new combinations of stairways and angles than the rest of us would about ripping last year's wash-dresses in order to alter the cut of a sleeve.

She rented a small country house with two communicating rooms. One had no closet. She closed

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and fastened the door between the two rooms, then, measuring by the length of a skirt when hanging, she cut away the lower part of the door. When this was done she built a small square closet and put it against the door that had been cut. This closet



Side light
from an
old Colonial-
doorway in
N.Y.

then made on one side of the door a hanging-place for skirts, and on the other a projection, which, with its flat top, was utilized in the adjoining room for books and flowers. A small piece of ground glass on the top gave light to the closet. A narrow seat in front made of pine served as a resting-place when shoes were changed; the space under the seat was utilized as a shoe-box.

There are still garrets in the country, enchanting realms for children on rainy days, when old trunks and chests are ransacked and their treasures of ball-dresses and wonderful hats are brought out. But there are no garrets in town,—none at least in fine houses; there are trunk-rooms, sometimes, not always. A corner in the basement is generally set aside for these, specially designed in new mansions, and improvised in more modest abodes. We always miss these garrets, those of us who have known them. The constant care of modern town-dwellers is how to store away things without sacrificing space that is valuable, and without so scattering them about that endless time is wasted in their search. Then there are the super-

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fluties, the ugly things which a householder wants to hide.

The best arrangement I know for small places is that system affected by a woman living in an apartment. In one room off the kitchen she put two rows of shelves running round the room just above the tops of the doors. Pasteboard boxes of a uniform size were then set out on these shelves. Each box was numbered. On the wall by the door a neatly written list was tacked, giving under the head of each number a list of the contents of the box marked with the corresponding figure. There was never any confusion in her neighborhood.

In another apartment I once saw two wooden boxes on rollers, made to slide under the two single beds, as we were once accustomed to sliding the old-fashioned trundle-beds of a long ago. One of these boxes held the party dresses of the wife, the other the extra coats of the husband. It was a makeshift, of course, but a clever one, as all apartment-house dwellers will recognize at once.



Whenever there is a jut in the window and no sill, a box is always to be urged; it can be covered and arranged as a window-seat. Inside it can be partitioned off for bonnets, arranged with trays for underclothes, or with shelves for shoes, the cover being hinged in the front. When there is a window-

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sill, or the line of the wall by the window is not broken, in small rooms such a box is impossible, taking up more space than it saves.

An invalid is apt to weary of her surroundings, especially a patient who has suffered from a protracted stay in bed with a nurse in attendance. The very pictures on the walls become unendurable, — the paper, the hangings. The atmosphere seems to grow heavier day by day. Those who have been ill will remember the joy of the first grand cleaning given to the sick-room, a cleaning which has lasted through the day while she was kept in another room. How fresh and delightful everything seemed to her when she was moved back again, how reposeful, how delightful and sweet smelling! It was like going into another country for a change of air.

It would have been interesting to have devoted a separate chapter of the present volume to hospital-rooms — one for every house — rooms hygienically appointed, with oil-cloth and paint if nothing else were possible; places in which a patient could be cared for while ill, and out of which she could be carried for her convalescence back to her own room, perhaps. A hospital-room would be easy to arrange. It could be made pretty with varnished papers and bright hangings, hangings cheap enough to be destroyed afterwards without a pang. Were the curtains white they could be washed. There should be an open fireplace in such a room.

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Everything should be comfortable and cheerful. The sun should shine in it. It should never suggest sickness, nor painful associations.

When a hospital-room is not possible in a house, great care should be taken to provide night and day bedding for a patient, — blankets that once in every twenty-four hours were put out in the sun; linen made fresh every morning; pillows that could be aired all day, until the very sunbeams lodged among the covers.

We are apt to pride ourselves as a people upon the possession of closets, comparing provisions made among us for dresses and clothes with those seen on the other side of the water. Not long since an architect of note drew attention in a magazine article to the fact that in some foreign capitals important town houses had no closets, while the smallest of ours boasted one in every vacant space, — wherever, indeed, an architect, by straining a point, could insert one.

Every householder knows the value of a closet. Some know the joy of a linen closet, the sweetest-smelling closet in the world, with its shelves laden with piles of white linen assorted and arranged after unique systems on which each individual mistress prides herself. Lately, however, I have chanced to meet some persons who have begun to proclaim against the building of too many closets in the house;



The Tudor Rose
as used by
Queen Elizabeth.
A simple motive for
decoration—.

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they insist that a closet entails the loss of valuable space, especially a closet to which a person must be admitted who approaches a shelf. These persons insist that wardrobes are better, or upright mahogany pieces enclosed by doors, and containing shelves to slide in and out, or hooks for dresses. A series of these in a room, they maintain, not only helps to furnish it, but adds to the decorative quality. Well made, these closets admit no dust. They are, moreover, easily cleaned.

These people maintain, too, that kitchen closets should be abolished in small apartments, the pots and pans kept polished and hung about the stove, since the small apartment could at best only boast of closets so tiny that the task of keeping them clean and crowded with pots and pans would be impossible. A shallow closet with no nooks, no angles, no dark corners, is another affair, and so is an ample closet for the brooms and dustpans of a housemaid.

A house or parlor maid's closet, by the way, should be well stocked, and barred to the approach of any one wanting to put umbrellas or overshoes in it. A parlor-maid is not encouraged to order and cleanliness, nor can she be blamed for carelessness if encroachments are made on her domain and her dusters and brushes are taken at random, or her closet is crowded with things tossed in there to be put out of the way.

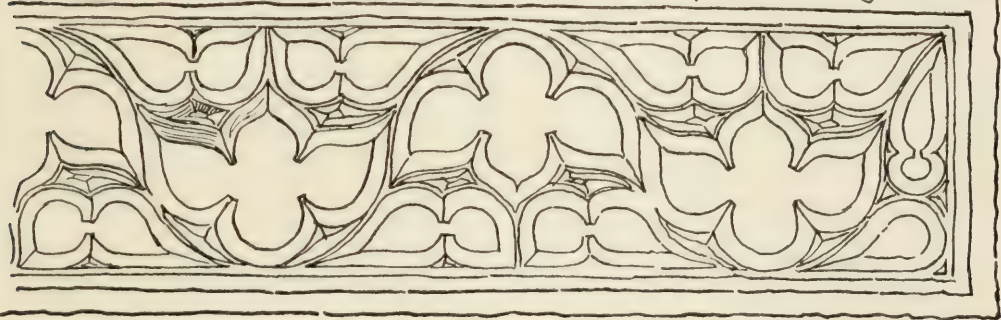
Space in a dress-closet is economized by a rod run from one side to the other, on which clothes are sus-

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pended from supporters like those that are seen in all the large retail establishments.

Our climate renders necessary a different order of living and a different architecture from that of other countries. The interiors of our houses must be appointed on a different scale. We have so many things to care for, — winter things and summer things; those for spring and those for autumn. I noticed no closets for the clothes of orphan chil-

Gothic motive. suitable for carving, or for burning on wood.



dren in Havana, only a series of big pigeon-holes arranged around a dormitory in one of the charitable institutions which we established for them. "Where do you keep the winter clothes?" I asked. "There are none," was the answer. "Each child has a small woollen shawl and one flannel undershirt for chilly days. They never need any more." And then it all came over me how simplified life might be for us if we never "needed any more," and if the "more" we did need did not include so many things — furs and rugs and curtains, and

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blankets and wraps, to say nothing of coats and dresses and bonnets and shoes and flannels for four different seasons and countless changes of temperature, for so many different kinds of snowy and windy, wet and dry days, that some of us are inclined to believe the foreigner right who said that in New York, at least, we had no climate, only weather.

Then, besides our bodies, there are our sofas and chairs to be cared for, our pictures and our books, our fine pieces of carvings; all those things, in fact, which are useful and those which our taste has impelled us to put into our houses. These must be protected from the dust and from that humidity which makes the feeling of dust so disagreeable.

The various conditions and changes render imperative the storing of much in summer, of dismantling our town houses, of providing a separate dress for them. We can send our rugs and our furs and hangings out of the house to be cared for, but we must cover our chairs and our sofas to make them enduring, to say nothing of protecting them. We must cover our curtains when we have our curtains down. We should try to do this without allowing our houses to take on an uninhabitable air, and the best way to accomplish it is to purchase some pretty chintz or cotton which, while serving a useful purpose, will not rob our dwelling-places of a furnished look.

The gray linen once universally used in our houses, giving them so bare and cold and uninvit-

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ing a manner, is now seldom seen except on railroads and steamboats. It never had any tact, this gray linen. It always asserted itself, and a small room filled with it seemed at once overcrowded and each piece of furniture twice its former size. Moreover, it kept the lower part of the room in too light a key, which is always objectionable.

With a pretty flowered material, on the other hand, a parlor in summer may be made altogether charming and habitable. Many parlors in their summer dress are even prettier than in their winter habit. One in an apartment which I saw not long since is treated with a striped and flowered cotton, costing only ten cents a yard. The furniture is all covered with it. The heavy portières, which were left hanging for lack of a space to stow them away, and also to prevent them from showing marks and creases from being folded, were enclosed in cotton. This is a custom adopted by many householders. Sometimes a bag is made and slipped over the portières. An easier way is to sew the material together at the bottom and fasten it at the top to the curtain rings. By being made full, the material can be basted about the thick hanging. A flap should go over the top by the curtain pins, so that the dust will not sift through the opening. A piece of the same material is used as a ruffle over the bare, uncurtained windows to break the line.

Expensive chintzes and cretonnes may be used in the same way, and the prettier the material, the better the results. In some New York houses

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everything is covered, even the tables, with this chintz, the dust being all pervasive.

These covers are no longer made with braid, but are finished with stitching, the two edges of the material sewed together.

Careful housekeepers have, besides these slip-covers, a set of white linens for the pictures and the bronzes of each room. These linens are hemmed and marked with the name of the room and of the article to be covered.

When awnings are chosen, the color must be considered from out doors and in. For green rooms, plain green awnings are better than anything else. Green looks well from outside against the red brick of some houses. There are some plain grays and browns that are agreeable. The reds are well enough from the outside, but they give no suggestion of coolness from the interior.



Old English seatend

When a room with a fireplace to be supplied with logs lies in a wing, a device is to send the wood up from the cellar by means of a dumb-waiter that opens in a window-seat. When the seat is cushioned and closed no one suspects the presence of a dumb-waiter.

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The best investment any young housekeeper can make lies in a purchase of mahogany, good old desks and sideboards and sofas. They possess a dignity which no upholstered piece of furniture can rival. The best foundations in house decoration are made with these.

When purchases for a house are made there should always be an ample supply of vases for flowers — not flower vases, either in china or glass, but plain or fluted white glass or crystal, pieces of pottery, fish-bowls, and always simple green glass vases of any and every size.

The habit of buying “ornaments” is dangerous in the extreme. There is seldom a place for them when purchased. Most of us at some period in our lives have been possessed of the passion for buying these things — bisque figures for mantels, mosaic paper-weights, boxes and vases of Scotch plaid, boxes of olive-wood from Sorrento or carved wooden spoons from Switzerland, small, cheap bronzes, clocks with glass shades, brackets with cow-boys crouching under shells as if ashamed to be seen, things that are found in notion shops arranged on a counter and sold at a uniform price.

Ornaments for the sake of ornaments are generally horrid things, and either destroy houses altogether when placed about, or find themselves when a house is to be saved inside of dark corners and on top of closet shelves. Interesting specimens of crockery are not to be confused with these, nor are pieces of

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brass which have some beauty of color. But even among these one must learn to move warily. Until one knows how to choose an object of beauty, something to be valued for its special excellence, it is better to purchase only that which first of all is to serve some purpose.

It is for this reason that you may be forgiven for putting into a dining-room that which would not be permissible in a parlor. Thus, if you could afford only one stone-china cup, you would be pardoned for using it on your table if you filled it with the best you had and offered it with hospitable intent. No matter how exalted your guest might be, you would not need to be ashamed nor blush. You would still be doing him an honor and breaking no law of good taste or good breeding, because you were giving your best, supplying a need, and refreshing the physical man; but such a cup put up as an ornament would be abominable, while a more gaudy or more costly cup would be worse. What holds good of a cup, holds good of every other appointment,—of chairs, tables, sofas, vases, pictures, and, most of all, of so-called ornaments.

Although the question of gardens does not properly enter into this volume, there are two suggestions which the reader may find interesting. In gardens laid out by architects in these days there is in many cases provision made for the birds. Small pedestals are erected of various forms, holding basins of water in which the song-birds can dip. In

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some country places trunks of trees are utilized, their tops surmounted by a basin. The cavities in the rocks are kept filled by many people, and it is always an interesting spectacle to see groups of robins gathering during the day for a plunge.

Every householder prides himself on the motto which he chooses for his sun-dial; here are two:—

“Pereunt et imputantur.” They perish and are set down to our account.

“Horas non numero nisi serenas.” I record no hours except the pleasant ones.

It is to be supposed that transoms serve certain purposes of utility in a house, but they certainly add nothing to its beauty. If I had my way I should shut them all up and fill the space left by each with a bas-relief in plaster. Now and then a clever artist paints them, and if there be a shelf enclosed with



Light over a door. Colonial -
Leaded glass.

leaded panes running around the room, it is sometimes interesting to treat the leaded design in the glass of the transom. Occasionally shadow silk is pasted flat on the glass, giving the impression of stained glass. In bedrooms the simplest fashion and the best is to employ a muslin like that of a thin curtain, gathering it on small brass rods placed on either side of the glass. In one or two instances,

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when the transom is permanently closed, a shelf is built in front of it and then set out with pottery.

The newest of the country houses of to-day are built with flower-rooms which open out of the pantry and near the dining-room. These rooms are large enough to hold two or more persons comfortably. In the best of them there is a wide porcelain sink with running water and wooden drip-boards on either side. Part of the wall-space is then filled with a closet having glass doors, for holding the different flower vases. There is, of course, a wide shelf on which the flowers are laid, and a drawer for the scissors, as well as a cupboard for the baskets and the straw trays on which the gardener brings the flowers to the house. These elaborate appointments are not always possible to every-day householders, but in each house there should be certain shelves set aside for the empty flower vases. They add nothing to a room when empty, and in a closet they are well out of the way of the dust.

